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From cannibal to consumer: The shifting poetic metaphor of the vampire

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**FROM CANNIBAL TO CONSUMER: THE
SHIFTING POETIC METAPHOR OF THE
VAMPIRE**

EMMA MARGETTS
B A Honours (Visual Art)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND ARTS
EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

JULY 2007

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The Vampire is a parasitic demon who has haunted humanity for thousands of years. Feeding off the living, this bloodsucking, animated corpse could generally be said to embody human fears surrounding death and sexuality. Appearing in a variety of mythologies around the world, the vampire has been connected with excessive and/or repressed desire, the subconscious and the dark side of human nature.

The vampire and associated metaphors reflect social boundaries and express forbidden desires, in particular, when the figure appeared in late-Gothic literature of the 18th-century novel. The transitions occurring within the vampire's iconography over the last 200 years of Western history offer us a fascinating mirror through which to examine social change.

This thesis presents a brief historic outline of the path sketched out by this imaginary avatar, from its departure in folklore and superstition into 18th and 19th-century poetry and literature appearing as a preternatural lover and then finally arriving on the screen as the iconic villain/hero of the 20th century. Focusing on issues of gender, sexuality, capitalism and desire, this thesis draws the conclusion that the 21st-century vampire is a consumer, lost in an insatiable and disorientating 'bloodlust' of materialist desire.

Through exploring the lineage of patriarchal terror and vampiricism endemic within our global consumer consciousness and behaviour, this thesis draws an analogy between the attitudes towards, and surrounding, the woman's body and the body of our Earth, the Mother. It asserts that the ideologies of desire explicit within late-capitalist society expose an erotic libidinal economy, which perceives both women and the Earth as commodity, there to be possessed and consumed.

Accompanying this thesis paper is a creative project called *The Gothic Opera: A Symphony in Terror*. This hybrid performance incorporated dance, aerial theatre and opera in a collaborative theatre event involving over thirty artists. *The Gothic Opera* traces a historical route through the shifting poetic

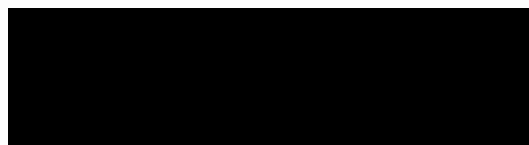
metaphors of the vampire over the last two hundred years of western cultural change. *The Gothic Opera* explores, through the medium of performance, many of the characters and theoretical ideas discussed within this thesis paper.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

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Emma Margetts

4 July 2007

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This work is dedicated to the memory of Richard Margetts (1956 - 1977).

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Illustration 1. *The Vampire*

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCING THE VAMPIRE

He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails
bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss [Joyce, 1992, p 60].

This poetic image of the vampire that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century in Joyce's *Ulysses* identifies what could be considered the iconography of the modernist Eurocentric vampire: a white male killer, a coloniser and heterosexual predator. This image of the vampire subscribes to the hegemonic ideological power structures and belief systems of our post-capitalist culture 1. , inclusive of both patriarchal and heterosexist models of psychosexual desire. Nosferatu, a creature enslaved by its primitive and cannibalistic bloodlust, parallels the iconology of our postmodern consumer culture 2. , a culture validated by the over-consumption of meaningless and disposable goods, immersed in the mythology of instant gratification.

Over the last 200 years, the vampire can be observed tracing a metaphoric journey through sociosexual and sociopolitical cultural change. As these posthumous corpses consumed the blood of the 19th and 20th centuries, it would appear that humans infected them with the cultural malaises of industrial postmodernism. Our excesses were transmuted into their sociobehavioural characteristics as the bloodlust of our desires was absorbed into the shifting metaphors of the vampire's iconography.

Ghosts, werewolves, and manufactured monsters are relatively changeless, more aligned with eternity than with time; vampires blend into the changing cultures they inhabit [Auerbach, 1995, p 6].

1. For the purpose of this dissertation post-capitalist or late-capitalist culture refers to the manifestation of capitalism specific to the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century. Post-capitalism is a largely American model of global capitalism perpetuated by corporate economic rationalism, characterised by excessive over-consumption, individualism, narcissism and the myth of instant-desire-satisfaction.
2. Postmodern consumer culture is our current system of behaviour and consciousness which upholds the myth of instant-desire-satisfaction.

Transcending time and death, the vampire reveals a microcosm of power struggles whose belief-structure dynamics are reflected within the macrocosm of our contemporary global condition. The axiom of consumer consciousness, the narcissistic pleasing of oneself in a search for spiritual ecstasy, now permeates contemporary desire with a decidedly patriarchal form of consumer vampirism. Our seductive lifestyle of the purely surface is founded on the phantasm of instant desire satisfaction and the false paradise of continually sustainable desire. Postmodern consumerism, subsumed in the erotics of consumption is a culture of civilised violence where unfettered bloodlust leads to increasing global, social and economic inequality.

This whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death and terror [Jameson, 1991, p 5].

Ironically casting no reflection in the mirror, the vampire of the 21st century mirrors our complicity to the formation of this new world order.

This revenant, however, has not always appeared to humanity in the image set forth in Joyce's novel. The dynamics of desire that lie hidden behind the patriarchal heterosexism of the 20th-century vampire motif have dominated this paradigm for only one century. Prior to this, the vampire was more often than not a woman or homosexual, and the subtextual narratives of their stories tell a very different tale.

The vampire's demonology has inspired a vivid tapestry of poetic, social, psychosexual and political metaphors since the figure emerged from the realms of folklore, became a character in English literature, poetry and prose in the 18th and 19th centuries and finally arrived as an iconographic hero/villain in 20th-century film and television genres.

The vampire is as old as the world. Blood tastes of the sea – where we all came from [Frayling, 1978, p 4].

The origins of the vampire are essentially unknowable. Its figure or form has appeared in almost every culture from ancient Sumeria, Egypt, India, Greece, and Rome, to Australia, Asia, South America, Indonesia, Nepal and Mongolia. Its better-known folkloric manifestations came out of eastern Europe, Germany, Hungary, Turkey and Greece during the 12th to 18th centuries. Attempts have been made to trace the history of the vampire through folklore, literature and film, however, the variety and extensiveness of this character's incarnations make such a journey near impossible. Montague Summers' *The Vampire, His Kith and Kin* (1928) and *The Vampire in Europe* (1929) are considered to be two of the more successful attempts to write the history of vampirism [Frayling, 1978, p 5].

The first English definition of a vampire appeared in the *English Dictionary* in Oxford 1734, defining the vampire as an evil spirit who animated the bodies of deceased persons [Grudin, 1987]. In the majority of folkloric accounts prior to this date, there was no separation between vampire, ghost, ghoul, werewolf or spectre. The folkloric vampire, who was largely established through descriptions of vampire epidemics in eastern Europe and Greece between 1680 - 1760 [Frayling, 1991], was a prisoner of physical urges, gross and corporeal. These vampires were terrifying spirits who attacked sheep, cows and their own human relatives in a violent attempt to maintain their immortality through drinking the blood of the living. As a cannibalistic deliverer of death, the folkloric vampire haunted mainly the peasantry and lower classes.

The Vampyres which come out of the Graves in the Night-time, rush upon People sleeping in their Bed, suck out all their Blood, and destroy them. They attack Men, Women, and Children, sparing neither Age nor Sex. The People attacked by them complain of Suffocation, and a great interception of Spirits; after which they soon expire. Some of them, being asked, at the Point for Death, what is the Matter with them, say they suffer in the Manner just related from People lately dead, or rather the Spectres of those People; upon which, their Bodies, from the Description given of them by the sick Person, being dug out of the Graves, appear in all Parts, as the Nostrils, Cheeks, Breasts, Mouth, &c. turgid and full of Blood. Their Countenances are fresh and ruddy; and their Nails, as well as Hair,

very much grown. And, though they have been much longer dead than many other Bodies, which are perfectly putrified, not the least Mark of Corruption is visible upon them. Those who are destroyed by them, after their Death, become Vampyres, so that, to prevent so spreading an Evil, it is found requisite to drive a Stake through the dead Body, from which, on this Occasion, the Blood flows as if the Person was alive. Sometimes the Body is dug out of the Grave, and burnt to Ashes; upon which all Disturbances cease [Grudin, 1987, p 60].

The preceding descriptive account of a vampire appeared in a journal early in the 18th century when the vampire motif travelled across the seas from eastern Europe to England. Here the vampire became an established motif in the literature of the English late-Gothic Revival, for example, *Vampyr* (1819) by Polidori, *Varney the Vampyre* by Rymer (1847) [see Illustration 2.] and Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871).

As a phantasm of the human imagination, the vampire myth could generally be said to deal with the taboos surrounding death and sexuality. Folkloric vampires were often held accountable for unexplainable or unnatural deaths, including the spread of diseases and plagues.

The burial of suicides at cross-roads with a stake thrust through them, usual in England till well into this century, closely resembles the precaution used in Slavonic lands for inducing vampires to cease from troubling [Senf, 1988, p 19]

Premature burial is another more rational explanation for some of the vampire's iconography.

The alleged vampires were people who, because of a cataleptic trance or some other physical condition that made them appear dead, had been buried alive [ibid, p 23].

Other sources have connected the vampire's characteristics and behaviour with the rare hereditary disease porphyria, which made its victims sensitive to



Illustration 2. *Lord Varney prepares for his hideous repast!*

sunlight, gave them red eyes and teeth, as well as craving for the 'heme' in human blood, the production of which was disrupted by this disorder.

Whatever the rational explanations behind vampire mythology, the motif took on very specific cultural representations and connotations during the 18th and 19th centuries as it entered the realms of poetry, literature, art and politics. Industrialisation and modernity began to take hold of Western society and its consciousness during the 19th century. Simultaneously, science and medicine began to erode our faith in religious and superstitious mythologies, finding logical explanations for the phenomenological universe. During this period, the vampire, essentially a mythological creature, was forced to out-jockey its human counterparts, finding less transparent methods of disguise. The Victorian vampire became more human and less ghostly in order to transmute the blood of the Age of Reason.

Though the vampire's representational metamorphosis may have shifted through the ages, its primary function, – that of being an entity that feeds off or benefits from the suffering and demise of others – has remained consistent with its iconology. The vampire has always been a parasite or demonic succubus, a creature who drinks human and/or animal blood to sustain its own life force [see Illustration 3.]. Vampires generally kill their prey; it has only been through the last few centuries that vampirism has become contagious. Immortality and the supernatural characteristics of the vampire were also acquired during its literary reign over the last 200 years.

Accounts of actual vampirism (humans found guilty of murdering or exhuming freshly buried corpses for the purpose of drinking their blood and eating their flesh), although rare, do exist. Vlad the Impaler, or Vlad Dracul, a warmongering 15th-century Transylvanian ruler, was recorded to have drunk the blood of his slaughtered enemies after each battle in order to enhance his own life force [<http://www.royalty.nu/Europe/Balkan/Dracula.html>].

The Countess Elisabeth Bathory was another example of a human vampire. Elisabeth or The Blood Countess as she became known, was a member of the Hungarian aristocracy (supposedly a lesbian and a cross-dresser), who was imprisoned in her own castle in 1611 for sadistically torturing and

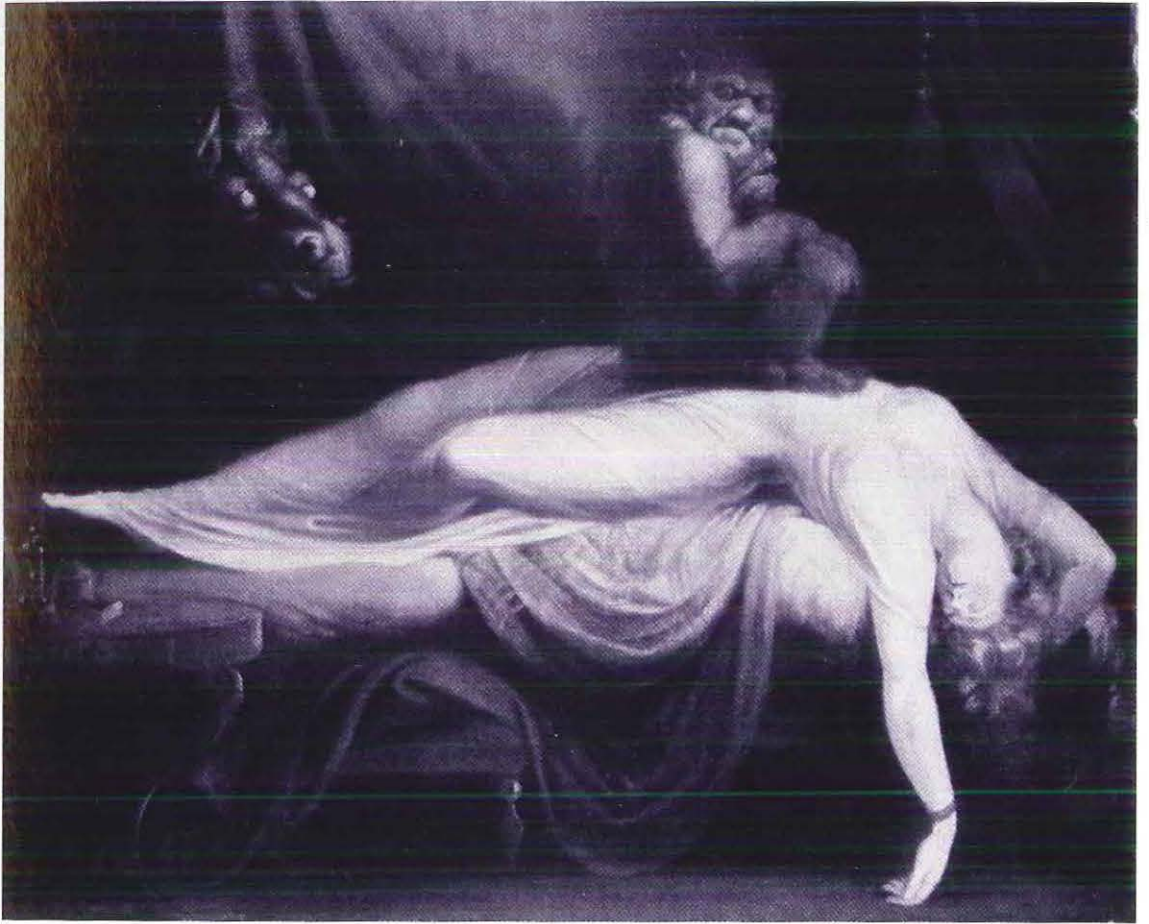


Illustration 3. *The Nightmare*

murdering 650 virgins with the aid of two elderly female accomplices and a young male servant. Baring-Gould wrote about this literal vampire in *The Book of Werewolves* in 1865, which relates the Countess's disposition for drinking and bathing in virgin's blood, which she believed contributed to her beauty and longevity. The mythology surrounding both of these human vampires is said to have inspired Bram Stoker's character Count Dracula.

As well as reflecting human taboos surrounding death and sexuality, the vampire motif could also be considered a moral tale warning against human frailty, excess and depravity. Vampire stories have included rampant sexuality, incest, greed and the taboo of homosexual desire. The highly eroticised vampire, who characteristically flourished in 19th-century English literature, has its roots in the ancient Greek myth of Lamia:

Lamia was a beautiful woman whose children were taken away in jealousy by Hera because Zeus had loved her. In revenge, Lamia began to steal and kill the children of others. She became a hideous creature. Because Hera had condemned her to sleeplessness, Zeus gave Lamia the ability to remove her own eyes at will in order to sleep. In later legend, the Lamia was a vampire that seduced young men [<http://www.geocities.com/wellesley/garden/4240/lamia>, 2003, pp 1 – 2]

The figure of the destructive woman . . . is one of the oldest figures in Classical and Christian lore. There was a mythic precedent. Lilith was the Hebraic temptress who supposedly turned to bloodsucking after being spurned by Adam, and Lamia was her classical counterpart, who, when found by Hera to be Zeus's lover, was transformed into a child-eater. It is Lamia who became the prototype of the Romantic seductress, acquiring, as the myth developed, an appetite for young men whom she would lure into her cave with promises of love [Twitchell, 1981, p 40].

The Lamia of Ancient Greece was the queen of Lybia, and the daughter of the god and goddess Poseidon and Lybie. She has been depicted in many forms, both seductive and grotesque. One representation of Lamia has her appearing with the body of a serpent, and the breasts and head of a woman.

In later myths, the vampire Lamia was connected to the legends of the lamia or lamiae, demonic bloodsuckers generally perceived as female or hermaphrodite [see Illustration 4.].

The vampire first appeared in English and European poetry and prose in Lord Byron's epic poem *Giaour* (1813):

But first, on earth as vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:

[Extract from Byron in <http://www.fact-index.com/v/va/vampire.html>. 23/9/04, p 4].

This was followed shortly by Coleridge's epic and unfinished work *Christabel* (1816), an example of a female homoerotic vampire narrative (discussed later), and then by Keats' *Lamia* (1820). The image of the vampire as a godless woman began to resonate within Romantic art, poetry and literature of *fin-de-siècle* European culture, for example, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire* by Baudelaire (1857):

When she drained me of my very marrow, and cold
And weak, I turned to give her one more kiss – behold,
There at my side was nothing but a hideous
Putrescent thing, all faceless and exuding pus.
I closed my eyes and mercifully swooned till day:
Who seemed to have replenished her arteries from my own,
The wan, disjointed fragments of a skeleton
Wagged up and down in a new posture where she had lain;
Rattling with each convulsion like a weathervane
Or an old sign that creaks upon its bracket, right
Mournfully in the wind upon a winter's night

[Baudelaire in <http://www.vampgirl.com/poetry-meta.html>, 2/6/03, p 1].



Illustration 4. *Lamia*

This example of a mid-19th-century French vampire expresses what has been termed the *fin-de-siècle* anti-feminine obsession. This obsessive fear of women perceived the sexually empowered woman as dangerous and immoral [see Illustration 5.]. During this century, the patriarchal intelligentsia became adamant that, hidden within female psychology and physiology lay the reason for the downfall of mankind and, like Baudelaire, blamed all human corruption on the fragile yet treacherous female sex.

Woman who, like the stab of a knife, have entered my doleful heart;
you who came, wild and gaudy, strong as a pack of demons, and
made your bed and your domain of my humbled mind; – vile woman
to whom I'm bound like the convict to the chain, like the stubborn
gambler to the game, like the drunkard to the bottle, like the carrion to
the vermin, – a curse, a curse upon you! I've begged the quick sword-
blade to win my freedom for me, and I've asked the perfidious poison
to succour my cowardice. Alas! The poison and the sword held me up
to scorn and said: "You do not deserve to be released from your
accursed thralldom, you fool – even if our efforts delivered you from
her sway, your kisses would resuscitate the corpse of your vampire!"
[Baudelaire in Delevoy, 1978, p 135].

Many of the poetic vampires from the 18th and 19th centuries were women, referencing their mythological vampire sisters, for example, the Indian Yakshis who through her beauty seduced men in order to eat them, or the Caribbean vampires known as Soucoyant in Trinidad, Higue in Jamaica and Loogaroo in Grenada, who took the form of old women during the day, shedding their skin and turning into flying balls of fire at night in order to seek blood [<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/vampire>, 23/9/04, p 2]. The Bulgarian Lamia, a mysterious fire-breathing, cave-dwelling creature with several heads and wings, tortured and drank the blood of young women [<http://www.fact-index.com/l/la/lamia.html>, 23/9/04, p 2].

The iconography of the vampire as a woman or succubus has historically taken on a very different set of moral and ethical values from her more commonly known modernist male vampire counterpart [see Illustration 6.]. As



Illustration 5. *The Sphinx's Kiss*



Illustration 6. *The Vampire*

the story of the sexually assertive woman, the female vamp or vampress illuminates many Victorian and Eurocentric gender stereotypes and illusions, most notably the taboo of female desire. The removal of female pleasure from the heterosexual union by Victorian medicine, science and psychoanalysis came part and parcel with the rise of the industrial state. The system of gender binaries, although not exclusive to the 19th century, would appear to have been heightened during this era as politics and sexuality were becoming enmeshed with power and economics under capitalism.

The first chapter of the thesis outlines a brief historic overview of the path sketched out by this imaginary avatar. The introduction focuses on the vampire's departure from the realms of folklore and its appearance as a licentious fiend in the poetry and literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. The thesis attempts to contextualise vampire narratives within the backdrop of western industrialisation. It also includes a deconstructionist reading of the female vampire's sub-textual mythology, exploring gender stereotypes and assumptions about desire highlighted within stories of the Vampress.

Chapter 2, The Victorian Vampyre contains three subchapters. The first subchapter opens with the vampire's entrance into the fertile ground of Victorian sexual repression. Here the thesis asserts that the licentious vampire's blurred sexual boundaries and preferences, destabilised the rigidity of Victorian moral etiquette and disrupted the capitalist desire for a reproductive labour force. The dark romanticism of the Victorian vampire's desire was an antithesis to the mechanics of Victorian sexuality. Patriarchy and the male elite, buttressed by the emerging voice of psychoanalysis, subjugated women and defined libido as a definitively male heterosexual arena. The Vampress thus embodied both the abject nature and disavowal of female sexuality by the Victorian male.

Subchapter 2.2 examines how the female vampire, as a metaphor for the sexually assertive Victorian woman, was considered taboo. It discusses how Victorian women's sexuality was accountable to materialist male desire and how her role as a silent, domesticated mother was reinforced by one of the oldest dichotomies within western mythology, the myth of the virgin and the

whore. Here the thesis relates the Biblical underwriting of female sexuality as negative. In blaming Eve for Adam's sexual proclivity, the Bible denounces women and their desire as evil. It condones women's suffering and punishment, setting the sexes against one another and turning love-making into a site of mutual combat. The symbolism generated by the Victorian homoerotic vampire thus violated the 'norms' of masculinity and femininity, blurring sexual boundaries and placing men and women, as both predator and prey.

The discussion on Victorian sexuality concludes in subchapter 2.3 with a view of lesbianism and female eroticism of this era. The thesis asserts that the lesbian vampire is the most threatening contender to male patriarchal assumptions about gender and desire, not because her love is sterile and therefore anti-capitalist; but because her love is not afraid of itself. The blood, tears, excrement, vomit and other bodily detritus associated with the abjection of the woman's body is not "other" to another woman. This subchapter explores two of the most formidable lesbian vampires of the 19th century, Carmilla and Christabel. It discusses how these original texts and some of the commentary written about these two vampires both uphold and challenge patriarchal prerogatives.

Chapter 3, Contemporary Vampires also contains three subchapters. This chapter examines the dominant motifs and metaphors the vampire has taken over the course of the 20th century and into the postmodern world. The point of departure for this discussion is Marxist theory, in particular Marx's analogy of the capitalist system as a ravenous insatiable vampire.

Subchapter 3.1 briefly outlines Marxist Feminist thought concerning capitalist society and the power relationships inherent within this economic system. The thesis then examines contemporary theorists such as Nina Auerbach, Sue Ellen Case, Michael Grey and Rob Latham who have also used the vampire as a metaphor to examine contemporary relationships to desire and power. This is followed by an exposé of post-capitalist society and consumer 'undeath', a compulsive state of overconsumption unrelated to human survival or need. Consumer 'undeath', a disorientating state of self gratification leads



Illustration 19. *Frank Langella*

to a schizophrenia within the postmodern condition. An exploration of our complicity, and the possible paths of resistance to the consumer system follows; returning to a discussion of contemporary imperialism and phallocentric sexuality. The thesis then asserts that women and the body of our Earth, the Mother are being consumed as commodities, objects of desire and trade in a male centred world.

A discussion of Count Dracula's iconic role as the most infamous and commodifying vampire villain/hero of the 20th century follows. Subchapter 3.2 begins by introducing some of the characteristics of capitalist and late-capitalist society. The rise of commodity culture, the commodification of desire and the eroticisation of power and wealth are discussed in relation to Dracula's sexuality. We then briefly return to pivotal Victorian vampire texts such as *Varney the Vampyre*, *Dracula* and *Carmilla* to discuss a stylistic comparison between the symbolism found within these narratives. This subchapter is concluded with an exploration of the myriad of filmic re-interpretations of *Dracula*, revealing the stasis and shifting attitudes to sex and gender over the last century, with an indepth analysis of patriarchal male sexual violence and rape.

Subchapter 3.3, and the end of the dissertation deals with the libidinal economy of masculine and feminine sexuality within the postmodern world. It explores the conflation of sexual gratification with power, wealth and domination within the consumer ethos via the commercialisation of women's sexuality. The thesis describes how the acquisition of wealth over and above our daily needs is represented as pleasurable and given greater emphasis by the myth of desire's attainability. It asserts that the 21st-century vampire is our entire commodity culture, with its unwitting side-effects such as exploitation, slavery, suffering, poverty and the destruction of the Earth's habitat. Discussion covers how the contemporary media continues to reinforce the dominance of phallocratic sexuality via advertising and 21st-century vampire film narratives [see Illustration 7.]. However, homosexual love destabilises materialist desire and, together with the repositioning of female sexuality and pleasure, provides the means for cultural change.



Illustration 7. *The Capitalist Vampire*

The writer would like to acknowledge that the concepts relating to patriarchal authority and behaviour discussed within this paper are written from the perspective of a white female, a lesbian and a feminist. Many of the ideas relating to power relationships and phallocratic desire come out of the authors desire to understand how social and sexual conditioning constructs identity. In writing this paper, the author aims to outline some of the less pleasant aspects of patriarchal behaviour embedded within vampire mythology, in an attempt to bring to the surface unacceptable or out-dated behaviour which lies beneath the motivation of our daily relationships and identity. This story of the vampire is by no means the only story of the vampire.

The practical component accompanying this paper is contained within Chapter 4. This chapter includes an introduction to the *Gothic Opera: A Symphony in Terror*, the modified script, a list of characters, a list of collaborators and a dvd of the live performance.

The introduction to the *Gothic Opera* describes the relationship between the script and the thesis paper, defining the themes within the *Opera* narrative and how these concepts relate to the theoretical issues discussed within the dissertation. The modified script, which follows, is accompanied by dramaturgical notes which elaborate on the writer's directions and choreographical intentions. The list of characters also expands upon many concepts within the dramaturgy of the performance.

CHAPTER 2. THE VICTORIAN VAMPIRE

2.1 Patriarchal Codes of Engendered Sexuality

One of the predominant shifts in the vampire's iconography over the last 200 years was from a symbol of death to that of a sexual mélange. The 19th-century literary vampire represented an array of tabooed and repressed sexual preferences, mirroring the psychosocial malaise of Victorian sexuality.

The image of the imperial prude is emblazoned on our restrained, mute, and hypocritical sexuality [Foucault, 1990, p 3].

The external codes of Victorian sexual propriety did not often reflect the reality and complexity of human sexuality and desire. The moral doctrines of Victorian England disavowed any expression of sexuality or desire outside the sanctified union of marriage and the engendered codes of behaviour this union prescribed. As the rigidity of the machine-age spilled over into sexuality, the veneer of denial defined a displacement of the sexual act within Victorian morality. The literary vampire of the 19th century, once

... feared for its deadliness became even more fearsome for its sexuality; how a corpse once thought to be possessed became, in a horrible way, the possessor [Grudin, 1987, p 53].

Why this foul, bloodless, degenerative, cannibalistic deliverer of death became a sophisticated and seductive predator lies hidden somewhere within the complex cultural and intellectual dynamics of Victorian England.

It is perfectly white – perfectly bloodless. The eyes look like polished tin; the lips are drawn back, and the principal feature next to those dreadful eyes is the teeth – the fearful looking teeth – projecting like those of some wild animal, hideously, glaringly white, and fangs-like. It approaches the bed with a strange, gliding movement. It clashes together the long nails that literally appear to hang from the finger ends ... He drags her head to the bed's edge. He forces it back by the long hair still entwined in his grasp. With a plunge he seizes her neck

in his fang-like teeth – a gush of blood, and a hideous sucking noise follows. *The girl has swooned, and the vampyre is at his hideous repast!* [Rymer in Senf, 1988, p 17].

The pages of the first English vampire novels hold the key as to why the vampire's seductive love embrace came to incite a passion in its victims resembling sexual climax, more than an agonising death.

Where families are inescapable and marriage is enforced, friendship may be a more indelible taboo than incest [Auerbach, 1995, p 19].

Many of the 19th-century literary vampires offered their readers an illicit companionship or friendship. Often as unattached homosexual or bisexual socialites and aristocrats, these vampires would seduce their human counterparts into a life of vampiric desire and abandonment.

The sexual sadism often found within these novels alludes to their authors being influenced by the perverse erotic literature of the previous century in the writings of the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. Both of these authors could be said to have explored a preoccupation with sexual behaviour that lay behind the veneer of prudery and denial. The connection between sexual eroticism, *le petit mort* and literal death within the vampire motif may suggest that the authors of the literary vampire novels were influenced as much by de Sade and Sacher-Masoch as they were by the burgeoning interest in sexuality, spurred on by the inventions of medical science and psychoanalysis. Moreover, the eroticisation of the vampire motif during the 19th century would appear to reflect a growing dissatisfaction with patriarchal gender definitions and the restrictive rigidity of the institution of marriage in the expanding modernist industrialised landscape.

All this garrulous attention which has us in a stew over sexuality, is it not motivated by one basic concern: to ensure population, to reproduce labour capacity, to perpetuate the form of social relations: in short, to constitute a sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative [Foucault, 1990, pp 36 – 37].

The beginning of the Industrial Revolution and the onset of modernity in the early 19th century heralded an expansive social, economical and political change that has created the structures and foundations of what we experience today as contemporary or modern life. Industrialisation spurred on the exodus of human life from rural and agricultural existences to the ever-expanding, often poverty-stricken isolation of cities. The new working or lower classes, alienated and disempowered from their means of production were enslaved to the new factory lifestyle, and the invention of the 'working-man's wage' assured the industrial woman's domesticity. The rise of the bourgeoisie and its ability to accumulate wealth heralded a new system of class ascension. This class had wealth and consequently the power to destabilise the previous aristocratic class system of birth or inter-marital hierarchy. As well as these internal social and political shifts, outer reality and consciousness were being challenged by the invention of the 'machine' and the development of faster means of travel and communication. Scientific, technological and medical advances also shifted many belief structures about the nature of existence, the human body and the phenomenological universe.

The human body is always treated as an image of society and ... there can be no normal way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension. Serious talk about sexuality is inevitably about society [Douglas in Laqueur in Lancaster and di Leonardo, 1997, p 221]

In many ways it could be said that Victorian sexuality lost the sentiment of romance and pleasure to the mechanics of reproduction. Stripped of all humanity, lovemaking took on the political agenda of the industrial state, its purpose being to fuel the advancing industrial capitalist society with labour and energy.

As the human condition changed in 19th-century Western culture, so did the vampire. Having lost its hiding place in the shadows of death, the vampire was forced to metamorphose from its gross and corporeal animism into the sophisticated and seductive shadow of a culture in decline. This spectre no longer embodied the ignorance and diseases of the peasantry, but was now

connected with the plague of human suffering, spread by the excessive greed and selfishness of the middle and upper classes.

The procreational political agenda attached to human sexuality during the Victorian industrial era may provide some explanation as to why the sexuality of the Victorian vampires became both excessive and transgressive. Some of the more notable homoerotic vampires were Lord Ruthven in *The Vampyr* by Dr John William Polidori (1816), Geraldine in *Christabel* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1816) and Carmilla in *Carmilla* by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1871). The object of this new breed of vampires was seduction rather than destruction, as the Victorian vampire's bloodlust became conflated with love and *agape*.

The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. But it will, in these cases, husband and protract its murderous enjoyment with the refinement of an epicure, and heighten it by the gradual approaches of an artful courtship. In these cases it seems to yearn for something like sympathy and consent [Sheridan Le Fanu, 1971, pp 109 – 110].

The illicit friendship these vampires offered their human counterparts and victims seemed to express a sympathy for the human condition, as if these creatures desired to rescue humanity from the monotony and confines of this mortal coil. In offering a release or respite from human tribulation, the sexuality of the Victorian vampires alluded to the inappropriateness of the social and political restrictions placed on sexuality during that period. The vampire's immortality offered a perspective from which human mortality was revealed in its slavery. At the same time, vampiric carnality exposed a model of psychosexual desire more compatible with the reality and complexity of human desire: the transcendence of the flesh over the duties of reproduction.

Appearing to be both afraid of women and threatened by homosexuality, the sexuality of the Industrial Age shifted from what Foucault defined as a preoccupation with *Ars Erotica*, or the exploration of sexuality through an accumulation of erotic pleasure, to that of *Scientia Sexualis*, the understanding of sex from the perspective of knowledge-based, patriarchal thought. Sex and desire were becoming not only the subjects of scientific, psychoanalytic and medical investigation, but had also become enmeshed with the sociopolitical mechanisms of the industrialised state and the regulation of sexuality and desire for the purpose of capitalist advance.

Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction [Foucault, 1990, p 3].

In the second half of the 19th century, God had been pronounced dead, subsumed by the monsters of science and evolution. What then was to become of His once-powerful enemy and nemesis? What devil, what vampire was to be blamed for the downfall of mankind, if humanity was to be granted self-determinism? If not a ghost, then what 'universal scourge' was to assume responsibility for the corruption of the earth's inhabitants?

As Steven Marcus points out in *The Other Victorians*, many authorities thought of sex as "a universal and virtually incurable scourge" that served as a kind of "metaphor for death, as cancer does today". All sex was suspected to contain the seeds of insanity and physical degeneration, and men and boys alike were frequently terrorised by the spectre of an imaginary, catch-all condition called "spermatorrhea" that could be the cause and result of almost anything [Skal, 1990, p 28].

Similarly, theories concerning female sexual degeneracy were documented in Dr Isaac Baker Brown's book, *On the Curability of Certain Forms of Insanity, Epilepsy, Catalepsy, and Hysteria in Females* (1866). Brown advocated the removal of the clitoris, (clitorectomy) as a cure for many so-called female psychological imbalances. The symptoms of sexual imbalance and mania in a

Victorian woman, noted by Brown below, appeared to consist of a distaste for submissive social status and subjugated sexual roles.

The patient becomes restless and excited, or melancholy and retiring, listless and indifferent to the social influences of domestic life ... Often a great disposition for novelties is exhibited, the patient desiring to escape from home, fond of becoming a nurse in hospitals, *soeur de charite*, or other pursuits of like nature, according to station and opportunities ... To these symptoms in the single female will be added, in the married, distaste for marital intercourse [Brown in Lancaster and di Leonardo, 1997, p 327].

Harry Campbell, a prominent London pathologist, wrote in 1891 in his book, *Differences in the Nervous Organisation of Man and Woman*,

The sexual instinct in the civilized woman is, I believe, tending to atrophy ... the female must lend herself to the sexual act ... sexual instinct in the woman has not been essential to the successful performance of the sexual act ... a large proportion of women do not experience the slightest desire before marriage [Campbell in Dijkstra, 1986, pp 119 – 120].

The supposed female 'absence' in sexual union justified the domination exercised by husbands in order to ensure that the species thrived. Proudhon, one of the founding members of the anarchist movement wrote in his book *On Pornocracy, or Women in Modern Times* (1858) that "woman does not at all dislike to be treated a bit violently, or even to be raped". Auguste Forel remarked in *The Sexual Question* (1906), "It is notorious that many women like to be beaten by their husbands, and are not content unless this is done" [Proudhon and Forel in Dijkstra, 1986, p 120].

Aside from the epidemic of fear and fantasy surrounding the perceived 'plague' of sexuality, the 19th century, according to Foucault [1990], was also an era of sexual hypocrisy. Although Victorian sexuality was marked as a period of repression, it was also a period defined by a flourishing discourse on sexuality that intellectualised patriarchal ideologies. These ideologies,

particularly those concerning the nature of engendered sexuality, still constitute the subtle subtext of our patriarchal culture today [see Illustration 8.].

The political, economic, and cultural transformations of the eighteenth century created the context in which the articulation of radical difference between the sexes became culturally imperative. In a world in which science was increasingly viewed as providing insight into the fundamental truths of creation, in which nature as manifested in the unassailable reality of bones and organs was taken to be the only foundation of the moral order, a biology of incommensurability became the means by which such differences could be authoritatively represented. New claims and counterclaims regarding the public and private roles of women were thus contested through questions about the nature of their bodies as distinguished from those of men. In these new discursive wars, feminists as well as antifeminists sacrificed the idea of women as inherently passionate; sexual pleasure as a sign in the flesh of reproductive capacity fell victim to political exigencies [Lacquer in Lancaster and di Leonardo, 1997, pp 240 – 241].

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, women had been considered inferior but their experience of sexual pleasure was often seen as part of the cosmic order of reproductive instincts, the prerequisite for conception and survival.

Handle her secret parts and dugs, that she may take fire and be enflamed in ventry, for so at length the wombe will strive and waxe fervent with desire of casting forth its own seed, and receiving the man's seed to be mixed together therein [Lacquer in Lancaster and di Leonardo, 1997, p 224].

In the 18th century, due to the changes to the political, economic and social systems, women's experience of sexual pleasure was denied. Women were expected to joylessly procreate, and the patriarchy (science, medicine and psychoanalysis) construed facts and created myths to support such beliefs.

The late Industrial Revolution was a time of dualism and polarity in science and society; men were obsessed with controlling an untamed



Illustration 8. *Ulysses and the Sirens*

nature through the application of science, and woman-as-nature became the wholesale target for male projections (it was near this time that Freud boasted of controlling his patients' menstrual bleeding through hypnosis). It was an age that eroticised the consumptive, corpselike woman in literature and art, corseted the female body, and held in general horror anything that might be construed as animated – or animal – in the female of the species [Skal, 1990, pp 29 – 30].

Within the structures of this binary model, women were seen as biologically and sexually inferior to men. Men were defined as dominant, independent, rational and naturally socially assertive; their physical strength was considered proof of their biological superiority. In contrast women were seen as inverted men, with an atrophied male sexual physiology that defined their true status. They were considered weak, fickle and irrational, best suited to a domestic lifestyle and prone to being overly emotional and impressionable. Granted submissive sociosexual status, women were often seen as confused imitators who lacked self-determinism. Victorian culture believed that women needed to be guided and protected by males, both from themselves as well as from anyone who might wish to corrupt their ignorant and vulnerable states. Women were seen as eternal children, and their perceived weakness justified their exclusion from pursuing a career or achieving financial independence through owning property or controlling their finances, having the right to be educated or to vote. Women were deemed to be second-class citizens living under male rule because they were incapable of self-government, tending towards moral degeneracy. Although these patriarchal attitudes were not exclusively Victorian, they were heightened through the validation of pseudoscientific investigations and through the propagation of psychoanalysis.

Libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman [Freud in Lacan, 1982, pp 107 – 108].

Probably the greatest advocate of women's perceived psychological, social and sexual inferiority was the man who intellectualised female sexual oppression, the father of psychoanalysis, Dr Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

Although most of Freud's theories were written and published early in the 20th century, his gynophobia and misogynist attitudes exemplify 19th century ignorance and fear surrounding female psychosexuality. Freud's theories on human sexual development reflect the industrial patriarchal family structure where the woman (mother/domestic) is the primary and only nurturer and the father is the absent (worker/bread winner) authority figure.

The imperialism of Oedipus is such that any path sketched out by aberrant desire is immediately brought back to the fold. To produce the wolf-father out of the crowd of wolves in the Wolf-Man's phantasies, Freud turns the crowd into sheep so that the wolf-father may devour them [Grant in Lyotard, 1993, xxiii].

Freud's theories of Oedipus and penis envy derogate and subjugate women and children, creating a phallogentric system of desire based on sexual ownership and domination. Freud asserts that inferior female desire can only be defined in relation to its male sexual counterpart and as a response to the sight of the phallus. Freud's theory of Oedipus also proposes that children's sensual love identifications are sexual, enabling or justifying the empowered sexual male to project needs or desires onto the innocence of children. Freud then turns the female child competitively against her mother whom she blames for denying her the symbol of a 'real' sexuality, a penis, (penis envy).

In psychoanalysis women are definitionally reduced to a necessary dependence on men. Women's castration is sociohistorical and signficatory rather than anatomical and physiological ... this sociolinguistic inscription of women's bodies must be seen as the unspoken condition of the attribution of men's phallic status: it is only if women's bodies *lack* that men's bodies can be seen to *have* [Grosz in Burke, Schor and Whitford, 1994, p 337]

Freud believed women were sexually inferior due to the struggle they experienced when forced to surrender their pre-Oedipal desire for the mother (innate bisexuality or clitoral autoeroticism) for the more normal or 'civilised' heterosexual desire for the father and phallus. This belief constituted the ideological basis behind Freud's theory of the vaginal orgasm, one of the

more oppressive myths created by a man about the female sexual anatomy. Vaginal orgasm has a political as well as social and economic agenda in that the perceived satisfaction attained during heterosexual intercourse is delimited to reproductive duty. The myth of the vaginal orgasm imposes a social morality upon female sexual pleasure.

The establishment of clitoral orgasm as fact would threaten the heterosexual institution. For it would indicate that sexual pleasure was obtainable from either men or women, thus making heterosexuality not an absolute, but an option. It would thus open up the whole question of human sexual relations beyond the confines of the present male – female role system [George, 1993, p 42].

In defining the female's early childhood sexuality as active (clitoral) to be later sacrificed to passive (vaginal) sexuality, Freud supports the socio-historic socialisation of women to regard their sexuality as evil or fearful. The 'myth' of the vaginal orgasm also defines women's sexuality as an economic duty. Sexuality concomitantly becomes a form of commerce, a trade-off between the sexes for the purpose of labour production and capitalist expansion.

Feminists and neo-Freudians such as Betty Friedan, Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett, Dorothy Dinnerstein and Nancy Chodorow question Freud's male bias claiming there is a lack of a female perspective within his theories. Betty Friedan challenges Freud's biological determinism in suggesting women's perceived discontent and dissatisfaction, may be due to the privileged social and sexual status given to men rather than to a woman's lack of a penis. Friedan supports Freudian thought in as much as his work has helped humanity confront sexuality openly. However, she does not support Freud's procreative restrictions as applied to female sexuality [Tong, 1992].

Shulamith Firestone focuses on Freud's hierarchy of power within the family unit and criticises his relegation of women and children to the mercy of the almighty father. She claims that Freudian and neo-Freudian theory does not address the uses and abuses of power within the patriarchal family structure and believes the abolition of the "nuclear family" is the only pathway to redress this imbalance [ibid, 1992].

Similarly, Kate Millett objects to the sexual aggression inherent within neo-Freudian concepts of the male's biological necessity to overcome the female's sexual resistance. She believes such attitudes are grounded in the socio-historical tolerance of rape as acceptable behaviour between men and women. Millett also disapproves of Freud's misreading of the power of childbirth as a hunt for a male organ [ibid, 1992].

The lack of dual parenting has been identified by Dinnerstein and Chodorow as the root of many social dysfunctions. They believe if dual parenting occurred, children would no longer blame their mother for their mortality, nor would they see their father as omnipotent. They believe sexuality could be better constructed if both genders were equal [ibid, 1992].

Though many of Freud's contemporaries and successors challenged and refuted his findings, his theories still survive at the core of psychoanalytic thought. Unfortunately a number of Freud's opponents inadvertently reinforce his principles in their attempts to find alternative explanations for behavioural traits.

Freud's opinion that libido is essentially a male phenomenon has also prevailed throughout 20th-century Eurocentric attitudes to sexuality and gender. These codes of patriarchal male desire are also explicit within the vampire motif.

In Stoker's novel ... all aspects of the period's suspicions about the degenerative tendencies in women have been brought together in such an effortless fashion that it is clear that for the author these were not so much a part of the symbolic structures of fantasy as the conditions of universal truth. Stoker's work demonstrates how thoroughly the war waged by the nineteenth-century male culture against the dignity and self-respect of women had been fought ... (Dracula is) a narrative destined to become the twentieth century's basic commonplace book of the antifeminine obsession [Dijkstra in Skal, 1990, p 30].

In general, gynophobia or homophobia underpin 19th-century vampire narratives pointing to the general difficulty with desire held by that particular society. A culture of hypocrisy, the veneer of Victorian prudery was laid to waste throughout the erotically charged pages of the Victorian vampire novel. The Victorian homoerotic vampire exposed an underlying dissatisfaction with gender definitions and the rigidity of the institution of marriage. The flourishing discourse on human sexuality delimited by the biology of opposites gave birth to a mechanics of seduction and a reign of the phallus which threatened to impose not only intellectual, but political and economic values on human desire. The negative codification of the female vampire as a potent metaphor for degenerate female sexuality, gave way to the removal of female pleasure from heterosexual lovemaking as a by-product of the growing importance of capitalist desire.

2.2 Vampress: The Abjection of Female Desire

The female vampire or 'vamp' diametrically opposes the commonly accepted image of Victorian femininity. The Victorian woman was defined as ignorant, child-like and void of desire, and her passive heterosexual monogamy was essential to the expansion of the capitalist dream. By the 1900s, the female vampire represented:

... creatures with unnatural, viraginous tendencies, polyandrous gynanders who had renounced the responsibilities of motherhood and had become child-murderers, seed-hungry, bloodlusting vampires [Dijkstra, 1986, p 351] [see Illustration 9].

Victorian women who did not consent to the culturally prescribed role of a silent and domesticated mother were generally dismissed as hysterical spinsters, lesbians, vampires or whores. Desire, be it sexual or socially ambitious, was considered amoral in a woman, and those who aspired to any kind of social position or status outside the institution of marriage were considered a danger to themselves and society. Many of these morals and ethics pertain to a set of patriarchal values much older than the Victorian vampress herself.

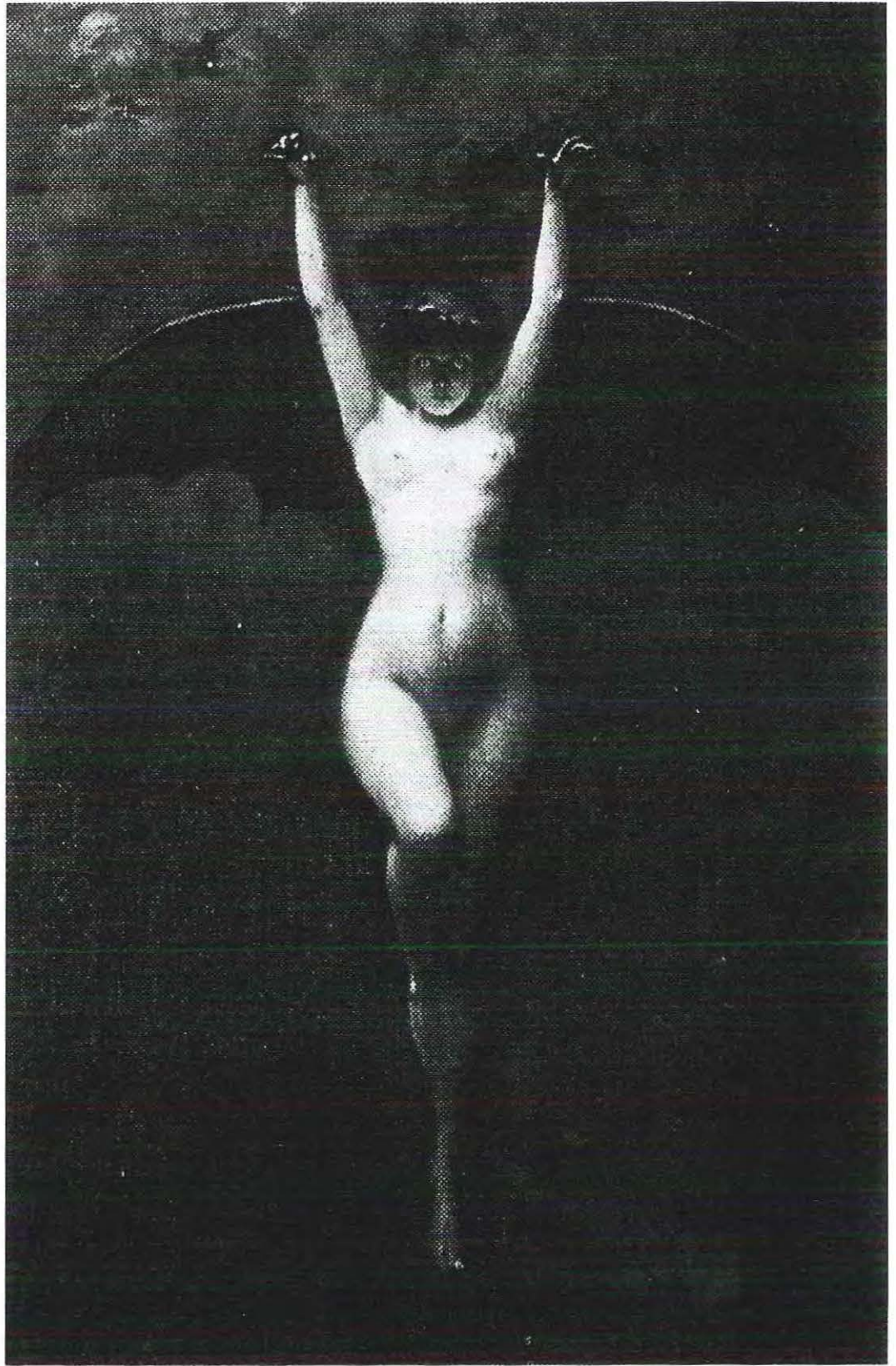


Illustration 9. *Fin-de-Siècle Feminine Evil*

The splitting of the female psyche into two definitive and polarised characters, the Virgin Martyr and the Blasphemous Whore, is affirmed by the archetypal mythology of the female vampire. The Christian construct of a female cultural paradigm was largely based upon the image of the Virgin Mother. Kristeva identifies the "Virgin Mother of Christ ... one of the most potent imaginary constructs known to any civilization" [Kristeva in De Lauretis, 1994, p 176]. The fantasy of the virgin birth has created not only an unrealistic and unattainable role model for women, but it stands as a pertinent symbol of the denial of female sexuality within Western consciousness. A virgin mother fulfils the ideal of womanhood as a site of innocence, a blank canvas on which males can inscribe their needs, fantasies and desires, be they power, economics, trade or pleasure [see Illustration 10.]. The un-sexualised self of Virgin Motherhood removes women from understanding their bodily intelligence, and nurtures a culture of shame and denial around the female sexual organ and reproductive functions.

The Vampress is loaded with symbolism depicting the sexually active woman as evil. The Succubus, a female demon believed to have sex with sleeping men, derives its name from the Greek word for prostitute. The Lamia or *laminae* of ancient Greece were lustful she-demons born of the Libyan snake goddess, their name meaning either "lecherous vaginas" or "gluttonous gullets" [http://www.rotten.com/library/sex/vagina_dentate/].

The marking of women's sexuality as evil is neatly summarised within the biblical story of Adam and Eve [see Illustration 11.]. Here, Eve and her passive sexuality are held accountable for the downfall of mankind or humanity's fall from grace. Little or no relevance is placed upon Adam's curiosity or his inability to control his own desire or sexual behaviour.

Unto the Woman, God said ... I will greatly multiply thy sorrow
and thy conception. In sorrow thy will bring forth children.

And thy desire shall be to thy husband

And He shall rule over thee

[Genesis in Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing* 2. Western Australian College. Video-recording, 1972].



Illustration 10. *Alma Parens*

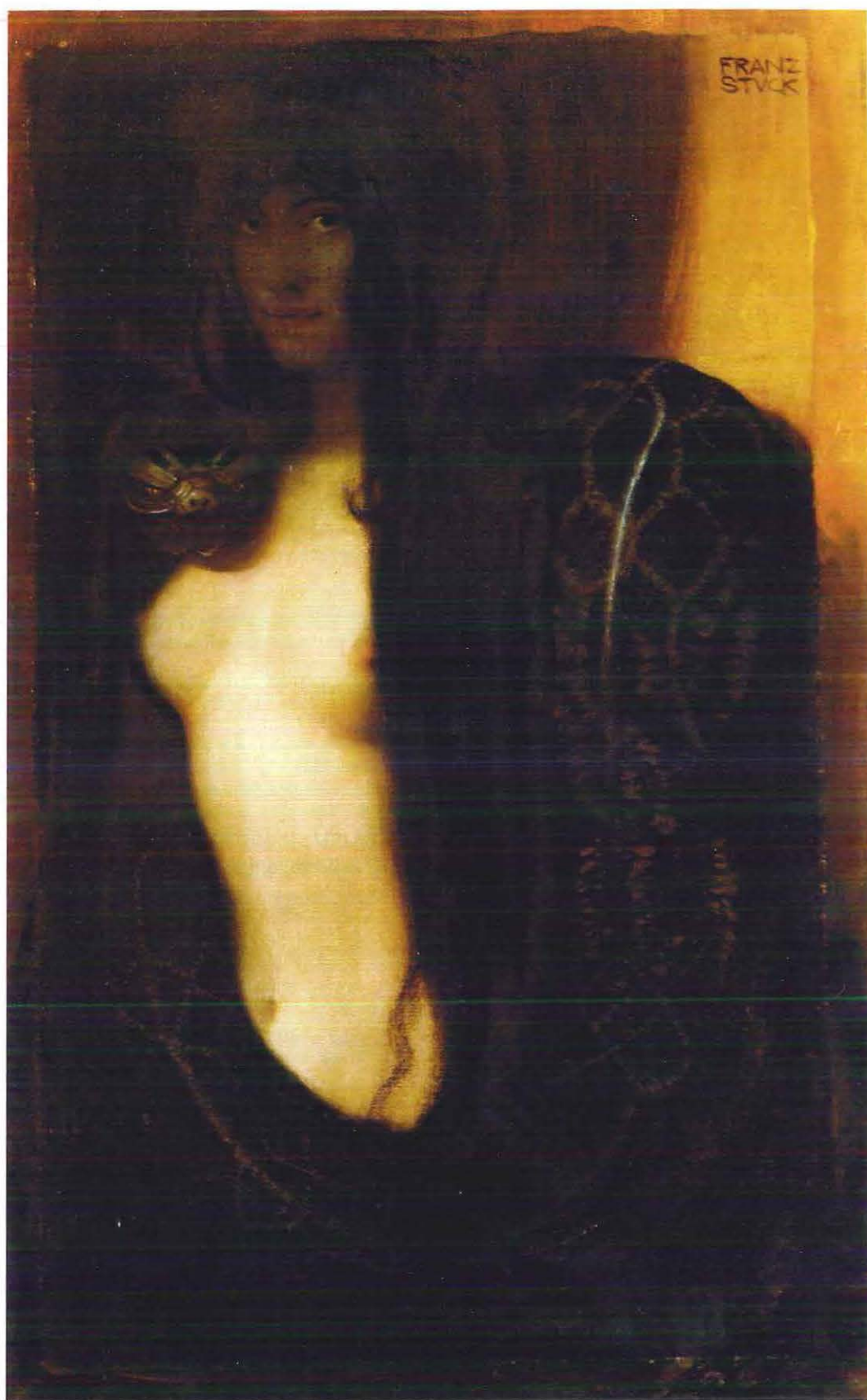


Illustration 11. *Sin*

The sociohistoric and cultural blaming of Eve for Adam's sexual proclivity establishes a psychosexual context that facilitates the removal of consciousness from male sexual behaviour. Consequently, male fertility, virility, sexual dysfunction or lack of self-control (rape) can all be conveniently blamed upon the woman. It also provided the patriarchy with adequate justification for the regulation of women's sexuality.

Some historians have argued that a key motive for patriarchy rested in the felt need to make sure as possible that a wife's children were sired by the husband. Given the importance of property in agricultural societies (in contrast to hunting and gathering), men came to feel an urge to control their heritage to later generations, and that began with regulating wives' sexuality [Stearns, 2000, pp 11 – 12].

Sexuality, it would appear, was becoming affiliated with materialist desire. Property, economics and, concomitantly, exploitation were taking sexuality out of the arms of the Goddess and the ancient rites of fertility, and into its grip.

The cultural fear of female sexuality can be observed in the marking of the woman's sexual organs as abject [see Illustration 12.]. The labelling of the female sexual anatomy (one can barely even describe its appearance or function other than as 'down there!') asserts the ignorance surrounding female sexuality and reproduction.

Blood, tears, vomit, excrement – all the detritus of the body that is separated out and placed with terror and revulsion (predominantly, though not exclusively on the side of the feminine) -- are down there in that cave of abjection [Bloom, 1998, p 14].

The image of a woman's vagina as a foul and pestilent cave of abjection, perhaps spurred by fears of male castration and venereal disease, has stigmatised the female gynaecological anatomy with more than its fair share of negative symbolism and terminology. Words such as gash, slit, wound, cunt, and box all condemn the vagina to a kind of filthy yet vulnerable, boundary-less and perpetually open state – as if the vagina were a condition



Illustration 12. *Post-Mortem Laureatus*

inflicted by a weapon, or an infected wound condemned to never heal. Patriarchal terminologies have reduced the female sexual organ to an image of horror and disavowal, encoding heterosexual lovemaking with the signs of a mutual massacre. The result is a battlefield where the toothed mouth of the vagina sets out to trap and devour the penis, ensuring that the phallus must encode itself as a weapon, ready to defend its patriarchal authority. As biological, psychological, cultural and spiritual opposites, man and woman are left no other options than to fight the enemy.

Although appearing in primitive cultures as a female goddess created and worshipped by women, the image of the toothed vagina could be said to represent the unconscious male fear that a woman's vagina was a misplaced mouth capable of castration. This image was identified and labelled by Freud, '*Vagina Dentata*'. *Vagina Dentata* also resonates with the erotic symbolism of the vampire [see Illustration 13.].

The vampire's penetrative suggestiveness lies within the erotic nature of its fanged bite. The act [of biting] itself is so like a sexual act that it seems almost perverse not to see it as one [Dyer in Gelder, 1994, pp 62 – 63].

The erotic bite of the vampire, an action that both sucks and penetrates, inscribes a kind of symbolic sexual hermaphroditism, a gender-neutral sexuality that disrupts the binaries of gender incommensurability. Thus the vampire blurs the boundaries of compulsory heterosexuality, where the aggressive male penetrates and the submissive female is penetrated.

The vampire violates the norms of femininity and masculinity, as alleged directly through heterosexual desire to marriage and procreation ... Vampires are polymorphously perverse: in their search for blood, they can find physical intimacy with a person of almost any gender, age, race or social class. Sexuality is transmuted into a new kind of exchange of bodily fluids where reproduction, if it occurs at all, confers the "dark gift" of immortal undead existence rather than a natural birth. Transgressive and violent eroticism links the vampire's monstrousness to revolution against norms established by patriarchal



Illustration 13. *Vagina Dentata*

The vampire's transsexual physicality suggests a toothed mouth has as much erotic potential in giving and receiving pleasure as that of the penis/vagina relationship. Such sexual codification could be seen to resonate with the pleasures of tabooed female sexuality or whole-body eroticism. Thus the female vampire, equipped with not one but two symbolic sexual organs, has double the sexual potential to disrupt patriarchal concepts of desire and engendered power relations.

The Vampress could be seen as a symbol of female sexual empowerment. She is Desire both active and passive. Free from the burden of virgin motherhood, the female vampire roams in the symbolic neverland beyond the iconography of woman as ideal. Abject in every sense of the word, the Vampress embodies all that men fear:

... that the male need to control women sexually results from some primal male "fear of women" and of women's sexual insatiability. It seems more probable that men really fear, not that they will have women's sexual appetites forced on them, or that women want to smother and devour them, but that women could be indifferent to them altogether, that men could be allowed sexual and emotional – therefore economic – access to women *only* on women's terms [Rich in Snitow, Stansell & Thompson, 1983, p 187].

At the risk of castration, eternal servitude or death, men do not have unconditional access to the body of the Vampress. Her unlimited sexuality calls them to surrender both power and desire to a sexual potential which they themselves hold, and yet deny.

2.3 Carmilla and Christabel: The Horror of Lesbian Love

The lesbian vampire is the most extreme representation of tabooed female sexuality. Wholly female-identified sexuality is labelled perverse because it exists outside the structures of patriarchal desire and Oedipal eroticism. As

one of the more challenging icons of femininity, the lesbian vampire like the actual lesbian, removes women from their passive and domesticated sexual status by shattering assumptions surrounding gender binaries and procreative desire.

The lesbian was a pseudo-male preying on and seducing unsuspecting, sexually naïve women. It was unheard of that a woman might have an autonomous sexuality. Nor was it seen possible for her to construct herself a sexual identity apart from that already assigned to her via her maternal instincts, natural passivity, reproductive role and social position [Clark in *Feminist Review*, 1987, p 207].

Two 19th-century vampire narratives that deal with the horror of activated or animated female sexuality, are the poem *Christabel* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1816) and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's novel *Carmilla* (1871). These two lesbian vampire narratives express the perceived cultural monstrosity of female desire set within the context of sterile female homosexual love. Unnatural and antisocial, lesbianism within these texts has been identified as:

... a love growing in adoration, and also in abhorrence [Sheridan Le Fanu in Bhalla, 1990, p 32].

... desire with loathing strangely mix'd [Twitchell, 1981, p 48].

The terrifying allure of the lesbian vampire lies within the power of her sexual androgyny. Behaving as if she possesses the same social and sexual status as the heterosexual male, the lesbian vampire can be considered a 'phallic woman', her polymorphous sexuality suggesting the possibility of other illicit forms of human desire such as homoerotic behaviour within heterosexual relationships. Assertive and seductive, the lesbian vampire feeds on both men and women, choosing only those of her own sex as companions and lovers. The lesbian vampire is abject because her predatory sexuality is deemed socially unacceptable. The double abjection of lesbian love, the horror of her sex, blood, death and rebirth dissolves however, amongst the company of women.

Carmilla is, like Christabel before her, impossible to think of in any human way. Her face is cold and immobile, her eyes are lustrous and mesmerizing, her body is sensual and languid, her voice gentle and lascivious. She is at once angelic and bestial, beautiful and awfully repulsive, indescribably engaging and full of "the lusts and malignancy of hell" ... In the shape of an erotically exquisite woman, she has, at the same time the strength to hold any living body with the unshakeable grip of death [Bhalla, 2000, p 30].

With all of the beauty and carnality of the femme fatale, the lesbian vampire can give life (and love), as well as take it away. Like Kali, the Indian goddess who beheaded her male lovers after coitus, the destructive sexuality of the lesbian vampire disrupts the paradigm of woman as a self-sacrificing virgin and mother.

The horror of the erotically exquisite Vampress is that her behaviour renders men weak, draining them of their power, authority, life force and reason. Thus the female vampire necessitates her own destruction, giving justification to the erotic pleasure found by the male who ultimately removes her from her position of power.

She lay in her Vampire sleep, so full of life and voluptuous beauty that I shudder as though I have come to do murder. Ah, I doubt not that in old time ... many a man set forth to do such a task as mine, found at the last his heart fail him, and then his nerve ... Then the beautiful eyes of the fair woman open and look love, and the voluptuous mouth present to kiss – and man is weak. And there remains one more victim in the vampire fold; one more to swell the grim and grisly ranks of the Un-Dead! [Stoker in Senf, 1998, p 50].

The first lesbian vampire narrative to appear in a novel was written by the Irish author, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu in 1871. *Carmilla* stands aside from many other homosexual vampire texts on account of its surprisingly sensitive representation of lesbian love. *Carmilla* deals intimately with female desire and sexuality through the vicarious relationship between a demonological lover and a young aristocratic woman.

Dearest, your little heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness; if your dear heart is wounded, my wild heart bleeds with yours. In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die – die, sweetly die – into mine [Sheridan Le Fanu, 1971, p 33].

Lesbianism within this novel has an unprecedented naturalness, an eerie erotic sensuality that is still uncommon in the many texts attempting to deal with lesbian sexuality.

This disease (*vampirism/lesbianism*) that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from nature – don't they? All things in the heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, act and live as Nature ordains? I think so [Carmilla in Sheridan Le Fanu in Gelder, 1994, p 61]. [Added italics]

Cinematic interpretations of *Carmilla* fall short of Sheridan Le Fanu's text and generally represent Carmilla as a male 'masquerade' inflicting her dangerously infectious sexuality on the submissive, sexually naïve and feminised Laura. As within many heterosexist readings of lesbian eroticism and desire, little is acknowledged or represented of the women's romantic love being inclusive to their mutual sexual relationship.

It is obvious from the very beginning that Laura, ignorant and naïve as she is and will remain, must become another unresisting and bewildered sexual and moral victim of a predatory society. The intrusion of Carmilla into her dreams and her acquiescence to Carmilla's erotic charm is a premonition of Laura's inability to comprehend that within structures of property and power all talk about gentleness, elegance, politeness or charity is a mask for the seizure of the land or the body of the victim for profit or pleasure [Bhalla, 1990, p 29].

Bhalla connects rape with the political sexual economy of vampiric desire, and describes Sheridan Le Fanu's text as a reflection of 'the actual and irrational infliction of pain by "the rich and the titled" (p 327) of the age.' [ibid, 1990, p

28]. In interpreting Laura's seduction as a rape comparable to the raping of the land by feudal lords, Bhalla is reading the relationship between Carmilla and Laura through the eyes and language of patriarchal desire. In Laura becoming the bewildered moral victim of a predatory society, dominant masculine sexuality and female submission are reinstated as the norm. Bhalla's interpretation empowers the language of phallic eroticism, and the vampire lesbian monster is used to uphold patriarchal notions that violence and sexual desire are intrinsically linked. The reality of Laura's seduction in *Carmilla*, the sensual and consensual exploration of a forbidden intimacy (*and you shall die – die, sweetly die – into mine,*) suggests a more frightening reality than death by vampirism. It suggests that an intimacy, completely separate from the socially sanctioned institutions of marriage and procreative desire can exist.

The horror of lesbian love within *Carmilla* originates not only from the bizarreness of an exclusively female erotic narrative, but its implicit acknowledgment and recognition of female desire and *jouissance* [see Illustration 14.].

I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very at the same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down under the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed [Le Fanu in Bhalla, 1990, p 29].

Carmilla was not the first homoerotic vampire narrative to appear in late-Gothic literature. The character Lord Ruthven in Polidori's *Vampyr* is considered the first homoerotic vampire novel. Based loosely on Polidori's own relationship with his patient and friend at the time, Lord Byron, this novel was written at the notorious writing competition at Villa Diodati, at the same time and location as Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The principal narrative of *Vampyr*



Illustration 14. *Carmilla*

revolves around an 'oath of secrecy' between the vampire Ruthven and the principal object of his desire, Aubrey. This 'oath' hides Ruthven's un-dead nature and, presumably, also his homosexuality. Ruthven's desire or bloodlust for both men and women within this book in many respects veils the homoerotic nature of *Vampyr*. Heterosexual desire predominates as the 'norm' in *Vampyr*, particularly at its end when Ruthven marries his homosexual lover's sister. The veiling of the homoerotic relationship within this novel unfortunately mirrors the reality for many homosexuals living in a Victorian culture, which condemned their love as criminal and/or insane.

Male homosexuality was punished in Victorian England, as exemplified by the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde in 1895. Lesbian sexuality, however, was largely ignored by the Victorian judicial legislation. The rationale behind its exclusion from documentation in British law was that acknowledgment of female homosexuality would only plant the seeds of such illicit desire in the minds of other God-and husband-fearing wives and daughters. Set within the backdrop of denial of female-to-female relationships, *Carmilla* describes a relationship between a female vampire and her human lover that is largely untouched by patriarchal assumptions and stereotypes. The love story between the vampire and her human counterpart is exclusively homosexual. There is no male hero lurking around the corner ready to instate 'normal' heterosexual desire. Regarded by many as the best vampire narrative of its genre, *Carmilla* has never achieved the status or popularity of other male vampire stories, such as *Dracula*. Its representation of female sexuality and lesbian eroticism has never been accurately translated into film.

Carmilla differentiates itself from other Victorian lesbian vampire narratives such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Christabel* (1816), which very clearly advocates the 'normality' of heterosexual desire [see Illustration 15.].

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! What a stricken look was hers !
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly as one defied



Illustration 15. *Untitled*

Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side ! —
And in her arms the maid she took,

Ah wel-a-day !

And with low voice and doleful look

These words did say :

'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,

Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel !

[Coleridge in <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/stc/Coleridge/poems/Christabel.htm>
25/8/03].

This poem relates the vampirism of fair Christabel by the vampire-monster Geraldine. The two women share a bed together after Christabel has found Geraldine wandering in the forest where she has been abandoned and possibly raped by a gang of marauding bandits. Coleridge suggests that Christabel's seduction by the vampire is welcomed by the virgin whose countenance softens as she appears to fall under the alluring Vampress' emotive spell.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! Since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine ! one hour was thine —
Thou'st had thy will ! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant ariew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo ! tu—whoo !
Tu—whoo ! tu—whoo ! from wood and fell !

And see ! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance ,
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft ; the smooth this lids
Close o'er her eyes ; and tears she sheds —
Large tears that leave the lashes bright !
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light !

In the morning, Christabel presents Geraldine to her father who recognises her as the daughter of one of his old friends. Christabel's father is also seduced by the vampire's beauty and removes Geraldine from his now-jealous and distraught daughter. Once again, heterosexual and Oedipal structures of desire impose themselves upon the perceived inappropriate lesbian relationship, as the older wiser male claims the young female innocent as his bride.

James B. Twitchell's [1981] analysis of *Christabel* highlights the general patriarchal inability to comprehend lesbian eroticism outside of the framework of masculine-defined sexuality.

Geraldine is older than Christabel; and seems to "mother" her; she also seems to have a pact with Christabel's real mother that allows her to violate Christabel's virginity. This peculiar overlapping of mother figures will be redoubled in part 2 (of the poem), for as Geraldine becomes companion/lover to Christabel's father, she becomes a surrogate or "stepmother" to Christabel. Psychologically and mythically this relationship makes sense only if we suppose that Christabel is a displacement or substitution of male consciousness, perhaps even a projection of the poet himself [Twitchell, 1981, p 41].

Twitchell's apparent inability to comprehend female-to-female desire highlights the psychological authority of patriarchal desire. In order to comprehend the assertive expression of female sexuality, he must transfer masculine sexuality onto a female character.

'Normal' codes of heterosexual desire encroach on, to varying degrees, all of the 19th-century homoerotic vampire narratives. The father substituting the lesbian lover in *Christabel*, Ruthven marrying his lover's sister in *Vampyr* and even *Carmilla*, despite its relatively autonomous expression of female sexuality is ultimately destroyed by the almighty symbol of male sexual authority: the stake. The victory of the phallus over the lesbian relationship

reaffirms heterosexual phallic desire and awakens through this violent action of bodily penetration, the lesbian from her state of 'undead'. Male sexual violence both relieves the lesbian vampire from her suffering (her immortality and confused sexuality) and cures her of her lesbianism.

The negative inscription of the 'phallic woman' onto both the female and the lesbian vampire's sexually assertive body has allowed patriarchy to codify lesbian desire, reducing lesbian behaviour to an imitation of heterosexual desire. The butch/femme codification of lesbian identity also adheres to the assumption that desire necessitates a masculine and a feminine element. As long as woman's desire is seen only in relation to, or as a response to, male sexuality, patriarchy remains in control. Examples of 20th-century vampire antiheroines who reinstate the 'inappropriate and destructive nature of the self-empowered sexual woman' are Rachael in Bierman's *The Vampire Kiss* (1988) and Miriam in Scott's *The Hunger* (1983). Despite the explicit presentation of lesbian eroticism within *The Hunger*, the power-hungry and detached Miriam (the male 'masquerade') must ultimately be destroyed, as her selfish and predatory sexuality is deemed inappropriate and anti-feminine. Thus the female sexual voice remains hidden or under-coded, for what can be named within the structures of patriarchal sexuality, can also be controlled or condemned. What sits outside this language is phantasm, or taboo.

The horror of the iconic female or lesbian vampire figure may also rely on the lack of positive sexually empowered female archetypes within Western history, mythology and, therefore consciousness. This lack of role models with Western consciousness makes it difficult to comprehend the female vampire other than with fear or abjection. The patriarchal prerogative of keeping women ignorant of their body and sexuality marries with the collective subconscious fear of the unknown, leaving the understated female and lesbian vampire lost in a sea of disavowal.

Lesbian loves comprise the delightful arena of a *neutralized, filtered libido, devoid of the erotic cutting edge of masculine sexuality*. Light touches, caresses, barely distinct images fading one into the other, growing dim or veiled without bright flashes into the mellowness of a *dissolution, a liquefaction, a merger ...* It evokes the loving dialogue of

the pregnant mother with the fruit, barely distinct from her, that she shelters in her womb. Or the light rumble of soft skins that are iridescent *not from desire* but from that opening-closing, blossoming-wilting, an in-between hardly established that suddenly collapses in the same warmth, that slumbers or awakens within *the embrace of the baby and its nourishing mother* ... Relaxation of consciousness, daydream, language that is neither dialectical nor rhetorical, but peace or eclipse: nirvana, intoxication, and silence. When such a paradise is not *a sidelight of phallic eroticism, its parenthesis and its rest*, when it aspires to set itself up as absolute of a mutual relationship, the *nonrelationship* that it is bursts into view. Two paths are then open. Either they take up again, yet more fiercely, the *erotic mania* along with *the havoc of the "master – slave" game*. Or else, and often as a consequence, death ... *lost identity, lethal dissolution of psychosis*, anguish on account of lost boundaries, *suicidal call of the deep* [Kristeva in De Lauretis, 1994, p 178].

The insinuation that lesbianism causes suicidal psychosis, generated by a loss of identity, supports the patriarchal myth that women's sexuality only exists in response to men. The warlike reference to *the cutting edge of male sexuality* exposes both men and women's conditioning into believing that heterosexual union is akin to a competition or a battle, where presumably one person must win and the other must suffer. Written by a feminist psychoanalytic writer in the 20th century, this text exposes the successful alienation of women from their sense of sexual self as reflected within the denial and abhorrence of female-to-female desire by a woman.

The condemnation of female desire and lesbian sexuality is expressed in many of the classic 20th-century female vampire narratives, for example, the 1936 Lambert Hillyer's *Dracula's Daughter*. *Dracula's Daughter* is a story about a bisexual vampire, the Countess Marya Szekelay, who has a moral dilemma with her addiction to blood and murder. This Vampress, racked with guilt and shame, wishes to cure her 'obsessive' bloodlust by enlisting the help of a psychiatrist, Dr Garth. After her first consultation with the doctor, the Countess is unsuccessful at overcoming her 'affliction', which is subtextually inferred as relating to her sexually assertive and bisexual behaviour. Marya

then kidnaps the psychiatrist's secretary and love interest in order to lure the doctor, whom she desires as her next vampire companion, back to her castle in Transylvania. Although transfixed by the mysterious sexual woman, the doctor rejects the Countess's advances. The movie concludes with the Countess's jealous manservant (whom she has promised everlasting life) killing his mistress by piercing her heart with a wooden arrow. The condemnation of bisexuality and female sexual assertiveness as socially dangerous supports the positioning of heterosexual desire as 'normal' within this film. The triumph of the domesticated woman (the psychiatrist's secretary) over the degenerate vampire bisexual is complete when cupid's piercing arrow of heterosexual love destroys the female vampire's confused, infectious and assertive sexuality.

In Roy Ward Baker's 1970 B-grade Hammer Horror production, *The Vampire Lovers*, an adaptation of Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, we observe a very clear demonstration of how patriarchal inscriptions on the lesbian body support the power structure of phallic desire. *The Vampire Lovers* encodes the lesbian vampire subjects with all of the horror and abjection historically placed on the sexually empowered woman. It also reinstates the virgin archetype as the positive female role model. Baker reduces lesbian eroticism to a few male-titillating scenes of young barechested girls chasing each other around a bedroom like children. The behaviour of these women are structured around the male gaze [Laura Mulvey] and this film asserts that the lesbian vampire's desire for her victim is akin to a gentle female compassion and empathy. The only other representation of tabooed lesbian desire within *The Vampire Lovers* is that of an implied real lesbian, (Carmilla's nanny) who, before submitting to the lesbian vampire's spell in shameful confusion and anger (caused presumably by her imbalanced sexuality), turns into a nasty and vindictive tyrant and anti-mother.

The more explicit examples of lesbian eroticism in this movie are erased as when the vampire Carmilla disappears out of camera-shot, descending to what we are to assume is the dark continent of Laura's sex. The suggestion of female-to-female cunnilingus is loaded with symbolic abjection, as the young Laura gasps in horror, not pleasure, at Carmilla's sexual advances. The look

on Laura's face reconfirms the centuries of disassociation, denial and fear of female sexuality and the female sexual organ that haunts patriarchal discourse. In *The Vampire Lovers*, the symbolic representation of a woman's vagina is marked as a site of horror, leaving her sex as the unknown ... a dirty, polluted cavern of disavowal not fit for consumption by anyone, not even by the godless and disgraced lesbian vampire whore.

The video cover illustration of *The Vampire Lovers* [see Illustration 16.] has little reference or sensitivity to the lesbian content of this film, other than the possessed evil expression on the female vampire's face as she glares toward her buxom, yet vacuous child – virgin victim (ironically a stereotype of male desire). Laura, the archetypal 'Damsel in Distress', whose breasts are conveniently and vulnerably falling out of her virginal white bed-dress, looks out of the picture towards her presumably male audience and the hero, the (elderly) male whose shadowy figure is staking the evil vampire in the seductive red dress in the background. The virgin is saved, female sexual ignorance is reinstated and the patriarchal model of heterosexuality triumphs over the homosexual vampire monster.

The lesbian vampire destabilises the norms of masculine and feminine power. The pleasure of the lesbian vampire, her implicit acknowledgment of a feminine sexual discourse and *jouissance* places patriarchy as the victim, not because she can choose to suck male blood, but because men are irrelevant to her need for carnal satiation. Sexuality, despite secular attempt to instate otherwise, has never revolved purely around procreation. Sociohistorically the institution of marriage would appear to have functioned more as an economic and political union than one of mutual pleasure or love. The repression and perceived inferiority of women guarantees the inequality of this union. Female sexual fulfilment has never been the prerogative of patriarchal society. The horror of the lesbian vampire and her antisocial sterility, as an enigma or an anomaly, stands as a portent figure or potential role model to any woman who does not feel at ease with the system of desire or sexuality currently available to her.

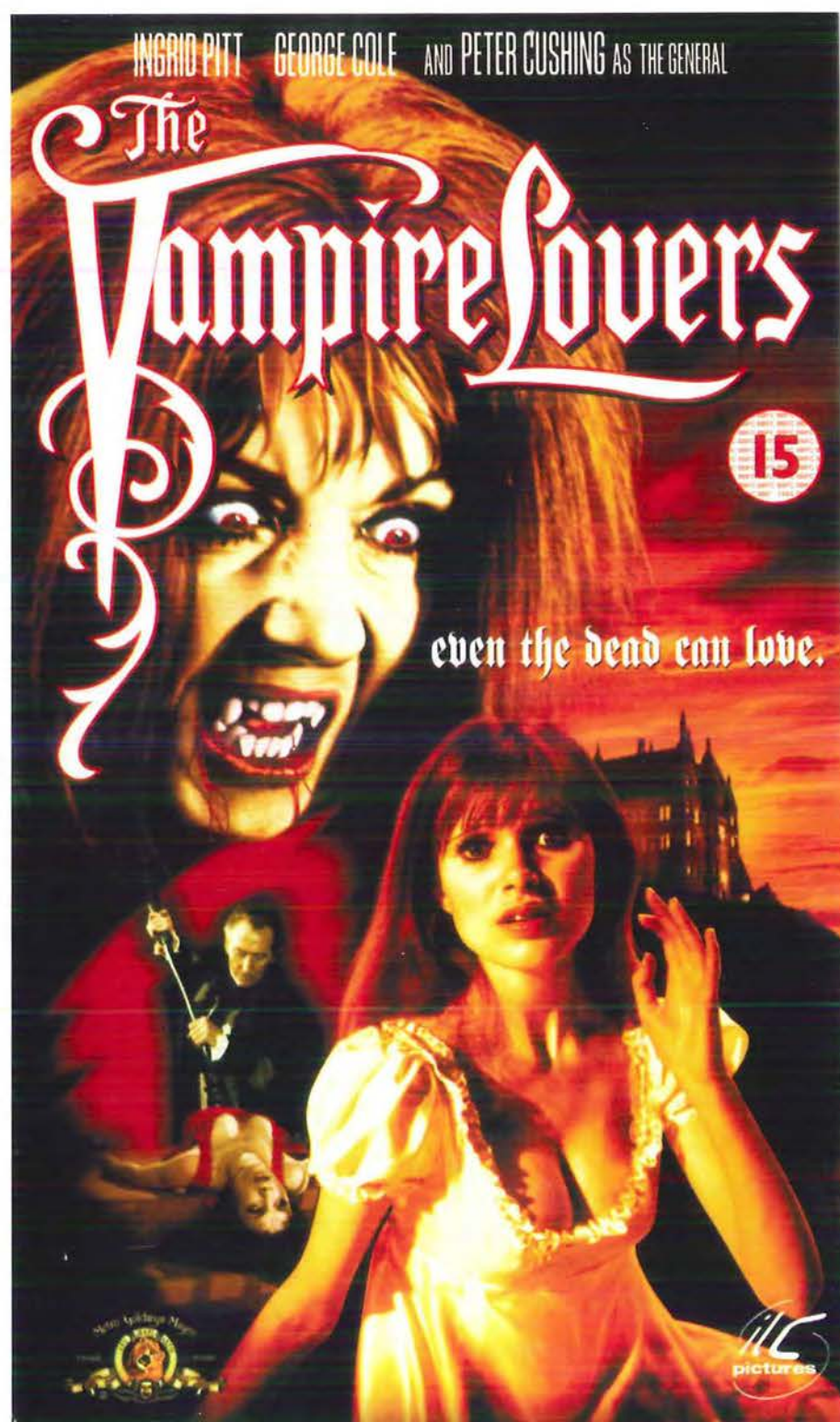


Illustration 16. *The Vampire Lovers*

The compulsory heterosexuality of Victorian industrial society was an illusion severely challenged by the vampire motif during the 19th century, outlined by its exploration of sexual taboo, in particular, homoerotic desire. The emergence of the homoerotic vampire within Victorian vampire texts can be related to the overall symbolism found within the vampire's transition from inanimate evilness to destructive sexualities. This shift can be seen as highlighting aspects of a misogynist and homophobic culture unfulfilled by the unilateralism of an exclusively male heterosexual libido. Female sexual atrophication, the imperialism of Oedipus and the 19th-century biology of incommensurability could not possibly have articulated the very complex range of desire for our modernising human. In the 19th century, desire itself becomes questionable, definitively amoral in a woman, and the burden of responsibility for male sexual indiscretion was placed on the unscrupulous 'weaker sex'. The cultural fear of women and the abjection of the female body exemplified in the story of the Vampress could be said to justify the absolution of all the violence and revenge taken out upon this iconic anti-heroine and her body.

CHAPTER 3. CONTEMPORARY VAMPIRES

3.1 Marx, Bloodlust and the Age of Consumer Desire

Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks [Marx in Moretti in Gelder, 1994, p 17].

Marx and Engels used the vampire motif as an analogy for the devouring greed of early industrial capitalist society. This political analogy began alongside the poetic and literary vampires of the 18th and 19th centuries. The scourge and general fears of *fin-de-siècle* Western culture were neatly summarised by the image of a vampire that supported itself by feeding off another's life force or wellbeing. The vampire motif became associated with forms of social injustice, in particular class hierarchy and greed. Its ruthless bloodlust reflected the corruption and narcissistic profiting which rode on the back of the poverty and suffering of the working classes in industrialised England and Europe [see Illustration 17]. Marx's political analysis of capitalist society's vampirism in *Capital* (1887) rings with much of the rhetoric of postmodern cultural theory and discourse on contemporary capitalism and desire.

Karl Marx [1818 – 1883] wrote prolifically describing the workings of the capitalist system and the power relationships or class hierarchy's establishing within the growing industrialised state. His philosophies centred around the belief that the modes of production within a society determined its social, political and intellectual life and the social consciousness of those who live within it. Marx believed that capitalism was a vampire due to its exploitative nature. He believed capitalism enslaved one section of the population for the greed and benefit of others. Marxist Feminists criticise Marx for omitting the significance of patriarchy as another system of power relations effecting the social, political and intellectual conditions of Victorian life. Marx's contemporary, Friedrich Engel's explained in *The Origin of The Family, Private Property, and The State* (1845) how the rise of agricultural society led to the decline in status of women. Engel's believed that men's increasing role



Illustration 17. *The Angel of Socialism interrupts the Capitalist Vampire feeding of Labour*

in food production increased their economic power and subsequently their social status. However, in general, Marxism ignores the plight of women in preference for the plight of the worker. Marxist and Socialist Feminists perceive both capitalism and patriarchy as vampires, for both systems very existence relies on the enslavement and demise of a section of the community [Tong, 1992].

The wife ... differs from the ordinary courtesan only in that she does not hire out her body, like a wage-worker, on piecework, but sells it into slavery once and for all [Tong, p 64, 1992].

Contemporary cultural and literary theorists such as Nina Auerbach, Donna Haraway, Sue Ellen Case, Fredric Jameson, Michael Grey, Scott Bukatman and Rob Latham have drawn upon the vampire's political metaphoric imagery to elaborate contemporary relationships of desire and power. Nina Auerbach in her book *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995) examines how every age embraces the vampires it requires, seeing the rise of the vampire in 18th-century literature as both reactionary and progressive. Auerbach also focuses on issues of gender and politics within 20th-century American culture and political history, ending on a note of hope with the rise of what she perceives to be the empowered female vampire in works such as Anne Rice's. Michael Grey's essay *The Vampire's Reflection: The Changing Metaphor of Vampires in Cinema* deals with the vampires relationship to the collective unconscious and what this reflects to society about the dissolution of boundaries and loss of faith within the contemporary world. Grey suggests within this article that the postmodern vampire is in fact everyone. Sue Ellen Case, on the other hand uses the vampire as a sociopolitical and sociosexual icon as she weaves a tapestry of erotic charged metaphors from the vampires' undeath state. Case, similar to Auerbach offers us the vampire as a libertine, capable of awakening women from the death of heterosexual duty to the power of female sexuality and/or lesbian eroticism.

Rob Latham deals with aspects of the vampire motif that appeal to youth culture and its mirror image, the contemporary culture of everlasting youth:

... the libidinal-political dynamics of the consumerist ethos to which young people have been systematically habituated during the contemporary period. The vampire ... literally an insatiable consumer driven by a hunger for perpetual youth [Latham, 2002, p 1].

Latham's recontextualisation of Marx's analogy and his connection of the vampire (and cyborg) narratives to consumerism constructs an image of a 'posthuman consumer identity', where public exploitations of industry have been transferred onto the private domains of a consumerist lifestyle.

For Marx, the capitalist factory system is a regime of avid vampirism whose victims are transformed into undead extensions of its own vast, insensate, endlessly feeding body ... The worker essentially becomes a cybernetic organism – a cyborg – prosthetically linked to a despotic, ravening apparatus [Latham, 2002, p 3].

Where once the worker was alienated by his/her removal from their means of production; the contemporary worker, still fragmented, is now seduced into believing that this lack can be fulfilled through consumption. Consumerism is thus a veil to capitalist exploitation, hiding the truth behind the death of consumerist activity. Posthuman consumer identity is a construct of the manipulative influence contemporary media has on the westernising global population.

There is no more need for an armed *body* to attack civilians, so long as the latter have been properly trained to turn on their radios or plug in their television sets. No need for solid, laboriously-moved bodies when their spectral image can be projected anywhere at all in an instant. From now on, military assault is shapeless in time and space, absolutely vaporous. And the population's orgiastic participation is no more than the irrational support of a *techno-logical supra-nationality*, the final stage of delocalization, and thus of servitude [Virilio, 1990, pp 71 – 72].

The birth of consumer capitalism began early in the 20th century when capitalism's production achievements outstripped market expansion, changing the very nature of its vampirism. During this period, in what Baudrillard [1987]

defines as the beginning of 'consummativity', the abstraction of human needs created a socioeconomic system encouraging greater consumer demand. Moreover, it deluded consumers into perceiving these demands as autonomous expressions of a new source of self-valorisation [Latham]. Consumer capitalism creates a frighteningly spectral image of the vampire: the seductive consumer culture itself. Consumer culture has removed itself from the actuality of everyday survival as the human experience slips further and further into the virtual.

Consumerisms meaninglessness distracts the posthuman from the chaos and schizophrenia of the modern world. The artifice of synthetic desires perpetuate the illusion that life's meaning is hidden somewhere within the satisfaction of material experiences. This distraction however is only momentary as commodity culture is a system facilitating overproduction to the point where it now includes the consumption of commodification as a valid part of its process [Jameson, 1991].

The false sense of a perpetual consumer paradise where satisfaction of all desires is immediately guaranteed is the phantasm by which our contemporary consumer capitalist vampires have lured us as prey into a lifestyle of ignorance, selfishness and everlasting cupidity.

For it is the axiomatic in Western economics that human desire is infinite; and it is this which feeds the dogmas of perpetual growth and expansion of industrial society. Consumerism is the belief-system that 'rationalizes' this unreason. Its iconography now penetrates the whole world through the global media. There can now be few people on Earth who have not seen selective images of Western wealth, the profligate lifestyles, the effortless ease with which money guarantees the rich a smooth passage through the world. The ideology shows human life, not as toil, labour and want, but as endless fun, entertainment, escape, money, sex; and perpetual distraction from the pain and pleasure of being fully human [<http://www.newint.org/issue295/mysticism.html>].

Complicity to this 'new world' citizenship could be considered the inescapable consequence of being fortunate enough to have been born into the privileges of a Western hegemonic culture. Apathy towards this new consumer lifestyle potentially makes vampires of us all, as we are, in a sense, born into a vampiric dependence on this social system for our survival.

There have been, over the past few decades a number of voices of resistance to the postmodern vampire's allure such as anti-advertising, anti-*Nike* or anti-GE food campaigns. Groups such as the 70's hippies promoted organic food, meditation and alternative lifestyles to escape the sins of capitalism, only loosely concealing their drug addiction and promiscuity; whilst the ferals or fringe dwellers who fought to save the environment, more often than not fell prey to heroin and social security abuse. In this day and age, spiritual enlightenment evades even the well-intentioned seekers, as even the Dalai Lama is forced to merchandise in order to support his journey through the consumer world. It would appear that there is no escape from the vampire's spell, only awareness. Unless you remove yourself from society altogether, you are unfortunately going to be a part of its downfall. Our only salvation may be to reduce our seduction into the structures of desire which perpetuate consumer activity and culture.

The structures of desire that perpetuate postmodern consumer culture express the greed and selfishness of a (largely American) model of individualism and competitive capitalism, a system whose consciousness is deeply rooted in a form of imperialism that is far older than capitalism itself.

The romantic narcissism of selfishly pleasing oneself, the axiom of Western consumer desire and behaviour, has resounding parallels with the doctrines of phallocentric sexuality. The ideology that drives this essentially unilateral and imperialistic system of human relations, feeds off the concept that women and children are male property.

Phallocracy does not allude to male dominance solely within a private sphere of sexual activity ... the concept denotes a successful claim by a male elite to general power, buttressed by a display of the phallus less as an organ of union or of mutual pleasure than a kind of

weapon: a spear or war club, and a scepter of sovereignty. In sexual terms, phallocracy takes such forms as rape, disregard of the sexual satisfaction of women, and access to the bodies of prostitutes who are literally enslaved or allowed no other means of support. In the political sphere, it spells imperialism and patriarchal behavior in civic affairs [Keuls, 1993, p 2].

The concept of ownership and possession has granted the patriarchal male a right of consumption. This right of consumption demands that the woman's body becomes an object of exchange or trade in a male-centred world, subordinate to the male ego's need for authority, sexual pleasure and domination.

Phallocratic sexuality manifests itself today within the continuing degradation of women within the media, namely television, advertising and pornography. The presentation of the female form as a passive and receptive vessel permanently available to male fantasy and desire adheres to many of the gender misconceptions set out within the subchapters on Victorian sexuality within this thesis. Privately, these images of women can imbue within our culture, a woman's inability to identify or acknowledge her physical, emotional, sexual or spiritual rights or needs within relationships or society.

The quintessential image of the elderly (more authoritative), less-attractive (beauty is not essential to male power) and clothed (protected) male vampire leaning dominantly over the sleeping, unconscious, catatonic or half-naked woman canonises these doctrines of phallocentric sexuality, [see Illustration 18.].

He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails
bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss [Joyce, 1992, p 60].

The supremacy of white male culture would appear to be constructed on a model of gender inequality and subordination that could be considered definitively vampiric; in that it premises the suffering, subordination and demise of other members of the community for its survival. Parasitic in nature, patriarchal sexuality necessitates a passive and an active element for desire



Illustration 18. *Bela Lugosi and Nina Foch*

to occur. In other words, it defines gender and sexuality through an exclusive heterosexist union with subtextual positive and negative binaries, a winner and a loser ... a vampire and his victim. The possession of the woman's body within this structure of desire and her subsequent sexual consumption have become, within contemporary culture, a symbol of power and authority in a capitalistic and heterosexually dominated economy.

One of the earliest uses of the term, consume, meant 'to destroy, to use, to waste, to exhaust' [Williams in Featherstone, 1991, p 21].

The body of the woman and the body of the Earth or nature have been connected since the beginning of human history with the prehistoric worshipping of the female form as a symbol of fertility. Science, industrialisation and capitalism perceive nature (and women) as a force to be overcome, to be possessed or consumed. Environmental Feminists or Ecofeminists such as Donna Haraway, Stacy Alaimo and Helen Forsey oppose this appropriation of nature and women as recourses. Where Helen Forsey identifies patriarchy and sexism as the intrinsic ingredients behind the successful exploitation of Third World countries, tribal peoples and the current degradation of the Earth's environment [Forsey in <http://www.life.ca/nl/57/ecofem.html>]; Donna Haraway rebukes the conflation of women and nature as only playing into the pockets of patriarchal and capitalist power. Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) challenges the view that women and nature are mutual agents by proposing the cyborg as women's only vehicle of emancipation from the tyranny and domination of gender binaries and male oppression [Alaimo in <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=95162816>].

Whichever position you may agree with, the concept of ownership and possession of women and children has led to gross injustices being committed through economic and sexual exploitation, just as the generation of wealth through the global expansion of capitalism has led to the destruction and degradation of the Earth's resources, population and habitat. Our current environmental crisis must also be seen as a crisis of desire where the abuse

of power, inherent within consumer consciousness, has sexual and gender implications rooted at the core of our human interactions.

3.2 The Story of Dracula: Seduction or Rape in a Capitalist Heterosexual Economy?

Marx's '*capitalist vampires*' found their patron saint in the story of Count Dracula. The most notable vampire narrative of the 20th century, *Dracula*, provides us with many insights into the structures of desire particular to that century. Written in 1897 by the Irish author Bram Stoker, *Dracula*'s reign over the 20th century articulates a system of commodified desire quite specific to the modern world.

At the turn of the 20th century, the Victorian vampire's lust for blood and sexual conquest became very much conflated with power and money. The ascension of materialist desire during the reign of Count Dracula, our iconic patriarchal modernist hero, was brought about by the manipulation of mass consciousness by the mass media. The story of *Dracula* with its glorification of patriarchal sexuality and its eroticisation of power is a reflection of the growing crisis of desire imposed by our increasingly materialist culture.

The (vampire) story goes beyond metaphor in its intuitive rendering of an oncoming century filled with sexual horror: the throat as female genital; sex and death as synonyms; killing as a sex act; slow dying as sensuality; men watching the slow dying, and the *watching* is sexual; mutilation of the female body as male heroism and adventure; callous, ruthless predatory lust as the one-note meaning of sexual desire; intercourse itself needing blood, someone's, somewhere, to count as a sex act in a world excited by sadomasochism, bored by the dull thud thud of the literal fuck [Dworkin in Skal, 1990, p 30]. [word added]

Dracula's sexuality was competitive, ruthless, violent and detached. *Dracula* can be seen as an analogy of our contemporary cultural desire [see Illustration 19.].

In his blankness, his impersonality, his emphasis on sweeping new orders rather than insinuating intimacy, Dracula is the twentieth century he still haunts. Not until the twentieth century was he reproduced, fetishized, bequeathed, and obsessed over [Auerbach, 1995, p 63].

As the harbinger of a new age, Count Dracula's iconic rise to power through the multitude of his reproductions illustrates the growing importance of the media and mass communication. Between 1920 and 1990, there were approximately 320 vampire-related films made, over 200 of which were about Count Dracula [Werner, 1992].

The iconic image of the power and money-hungry patriarchal white male vampire was, in fact, preceded by a literary archfiend *Varney the Vampyre* (James Malcolm Rymer) written in 1847. *Varney the Vampyre* embodied the quintessential patriarchal and modernist vampire:

Varney is the confederate of commercial society, rather than its monstrous rival. Hungrier for money than for blood, Varney seems worlds away from the dead-eyed, disembodied vampires Byron spawned, but Varney, too, lives in intimacy with mortals, embracing not a single chosen friend of his own class, but all the greed strata of England's hierarchy [Auerbach, 1995, p 33].

Varney kills to sustain his vampirism, but also to acquire the possessions of his victims. Varney embodies the parasitic materialism of an embryonic capitalist society. At the end of this vampire trilogy, overcome by grief, guilt and the hopelessness of his subordinate cupidity, Varney throws himself into the crater of Mount Vesuvius, a symbolic descent into hell, exemplifying the ultimate contemporary vampire irony.

Varney set the dominant psychopathology of the 20th-century power-and money-hungry vampire. He also set the scene for vampiric male sexual domination and violence.

With a sudden rush that could not be foreseen – with a strange howling cry that was enough to awaken terror in every breast, the figure seized the long tresses of her hair, and twining them round his bony hands he held her to the bed. Then she screamed – Heaven granted her the power to scream. Shriek followed shriek in rapid succession. The bed-clothes fell in a heap by the side of the bed – she was dragged by her long silken hair onto it again. Her beautifully rounded limbs quivered with the agony of her soul. The glassy, horrible eyes of the figure ran over the angelic form with a hideous satisfaction – horrible profanation. He drags her head to the bed's edge. He forces it back by the long hair still entwined in his grasp. With a plunge he seizes her neck in his fang-like teeth – a gush of blood, and a hideous sucking noise follows. *The girl has swooned, and the vampyre is at his hideous repast!* [Rymer in Bhalla, 1990, pp 22 – 23].

This scene is probably as erotically charged an act of sexual vampirism as was permitted by the literary censorship of the time. A deconstruction of the text reveals many Victorian sociosexual attitudes towards gender, desire and power. For instance, the passive women victim is described with emotive and erotic descriptions such as her “angelic form” and “beautifully rounded” quivering limbs. In contrast, the vampire beast ... our animal or presumably masculine self who is awakened by the strange howl in the opening lines of the quotation ... is described with general disavowal. Written in the third person, from the perspective of an onlooker or voyeur, the reader is placed in the position of identifying with the monster. As the passage unfolds, the reader and the vampire observe the woman's reactions both physical and emotive as she is being acted upon. Meanwhile the vampire/male psyche remains anonymous and in control, as we are given descriptions of what he does, not what he is experiencing or feeling. The erotic violence within this passage is never identified as pure violence, just as many of the passages referring to the acts committed upon the woman remain ambiguous. For example, “Her beautifully rounded limbs quivering with the agony of her soul” could refer to the sexual agony/ecstasy of arousal. Similarly, the shrieks the woman makes prior to this are not identified as shrieks of pain or terror, pleasure or delight. The final line offers another ambiguity in depicting the girl

in a swoon. The term swoon describes someone fainting, however it is often used within the context of being overcome by emotion or in a romantic surrender. These ambiguities as to the boundaries and acceptability of male sexual violence towards women repeat themselves throughout *Dracula* and other vampire narratives of the 20th century.

He held both Mrs Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream of blood trickled down the man's bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink [Stoker in Freeland, 2000, p 125].

The disease of patriarchal male violence and its eroticisation of power could be said to have found its way into 20th-century consciousness via the story of Count Dracula. What has often been read as a 'seduction' or 'love scene' within 20th-century vampire film narratives, the rape scenes within *Varney* and *Dracula* offer a dramatic departure from *Carmilla*'s slow and erotic vampirism of her victim. Interestingly, in *Carmilla* the scene is described from the perspective of the victim or person being vampirised, not the vampire or an observer.

I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast [Sheridan Le Fanu in Bhalla, 1990, p 29].

The reading of Mina's violent rape as 'seduction' in *Dracula* poses an interesting paradox with the cultural underpinning of patriarchal sexuality in vampire fiction. In Stoker's novel, the scene in which Mina becomes a vampire is unmistakably a rape. The many filmic reinterpretations of this scene, however, vary greatly from reading to reading, decade to decade, highlighting the cultural changes in attitude towards sexuality, and perhaps

the complexity of defining rape within the framework of patriarchal phallocentric desire.

The bizarre polymorphous sexual symbolism of a man (Dracula) with a bleeding wound or cut (a symbolic vagina) on his chest, forcing a woman to drink his blood (possibly symbolically connected to menstruation) has an array of gender-morphing, religious and homoerotic symbolism on top of the latent patriarchal violence found within Stoker's text. Mina's rape disappears from Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), presumably because of the censorship codes of the time, however Mina is drawn to Dracula's seductive charm, suggesting her latent evilness and weakness. Murnau (1922) and Hertzog (1979) have Mina dutifully submitting herself to Dracula. Hertzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* [see Illustration 20.], clearly adheres to incestuous fantasies of power and patriarchal terror. John Badham's *Dracula* (1979) has the couple engage in genital sex before Dracula announces that he needs Mina's blood. Badham's soft-porn version of this scene has Dracula appearing to be drained by Mina's sexuality. Coppola's 1992 version of *Dracula* comes closest to depicting this scene as it was written, however, Coppola's reinterpretation represents Mina's rape as a consensual act of desire, with Mina having to convince Dracula of her commitment to him before he exposes his bleeding chest.

Rape, historically and within the context of diverse human sexual expression, could be said to have many subtle faces, particularly in relation to patriarchal thought concerning gender difference and the perception of women as resource. Although men are also victims of rape, statistical evidence demonstrates that women and children are the victims of forced sexual encounters far more than are men. The Australian Oxford Pocket dictionary definition of the word rape is the forcing of a woman to have sexual intercourse against her will [Johnston, 1977].

Empirical evidence concerning the rape of women and children, as well as statistics concerning forced sexual encounters within marriage, expose the endemic patriarchal attitude that a woman's body and her sexuality are there for the taking.



Illustration 19. *Frank Langella*



Illustration 20. *Isabelle Adjani and Klaus Kinski*

One in five (global figure) and one in seven US women will be the victims of a complete rape in her lifetime [Kilpatrick, Edmund and Seymour in Lancaster & di Leonardo, 1997, p 414].

Very little research has been done into the effects of violence and rape on a woman's sexuality, other than reaffirming the Freudian and Victorian concept that women are sexually complex, inferior and apathetic.

50 to 60 percent of women who are raped experience severe sexual problems, including fear of sex, problems with arousal, and decreased sexual functioning [Burnam & Becker in Lancaster & di Leonardo, 1997, p 414].

If we are to include within the signs of rape, the psychological, emotional, economic or political coercion of a woman to have sexual relations with a man, then rape must also be contextualised within the historic cultural subjugation and denial of women's sexuality. As the structures of patriarchal desire have condemned women to sexual atrophy and ignorance, we must conclude that within the 'signs of rape', could be any sexual encounter between a man and a woman where a woman's sexuality, her needs, desires or sexual fulfilment are in no way acknowledged, accommodated or met.

What heterosexuals are counting as sexual relations are more likely to involve male orgasm than female [Frye in Rose in Greene & Herek, 1994, p 71].

Statistical evidence has asserted that, within a patriarchal and phallogentric culture, female pleasure and sexual needs often fall victim to male expressions of power and sexual domination.

The culture's privileging of masculinity means the hegemonic bodily imago of masculinity conforms with his status as sovereign ego, the destroyer, and that of women with the correlative status of the one who is made to conform to this ego, the destroyed. The male body is understood as phallic and impenetrable, as a war-body simultaneously armed and armoured, equipped for victory. The female body is its opposite, permeable and receptive, able to absorb

all this violence. In other words, boundary difference is displaced outwards from (imaginary) genital difference. The fantasy of the always-hard and ready penis/phallus characterises the entire surface of the male body, while the fantasy of the soft, accommodating and rather indeterminate vagina is synecdochal for the entire feminine body. In this way, the genital markers of sexual difference, the penis and the vagina, seem to render the kinds of power relations attendant upon them as natural and inevitable [Waldby in Grosz & Probyn, 1995, p 268].

The symbolic reduction of heterosexual sexuality to a vagina always passively submitting to the dominant phallus (the catatonic woman at the mercy of the male vampire's desire) would appear to offer symbolic and, therefore, psychological justification for dominant male sexual behaviour and rape. As Waldby [1995] asserts, it appears natural and inevitable [see Illustration 21.].

A beast-man in a Hobbesian jungle, for Dracula, sexuality is similar to a relentless hunt which involved enticement and entrapment; his pleasure lies in the humiliation of the other, and in her utter surrender. Dracula is ... Arrogant, violent and fanatically concerned with phallic gratification alone [Bhalla, 1990, p 51].

The phallic gratification of Dracula's imperialist sexuality could be said to embody the '*theatrics of patriarchal sexual vampirism*', in that it premises the display of power, male power over women's bodies as a form of sexual gratification and an appropriate system of desire. This system of desire found its first cinematic expression within the cult classic *Nosferatu* (1922), the illegal interpretation of Bram Stoker's novel by F W. Murnau. Max Schreck's vivid physical characterisation of a vampire as human vermin symbolically alludes to the debased violent sexuality of Stoker's novel [see Illustration 22.]. Murnau's alien rat-like vampire is far removed from the sophisticated and homoerotic vampires of the 18th and 19th centuries.

In an influential essay, the French critic Roger Dadoun calls the character Nosferatu "a walking phallus or 'phallambulist'." Nosferatu's rigidity is that of a corpse, "but the signs of an aggressive sexuality are abundant and spectacular ... Nosferatu might be called The

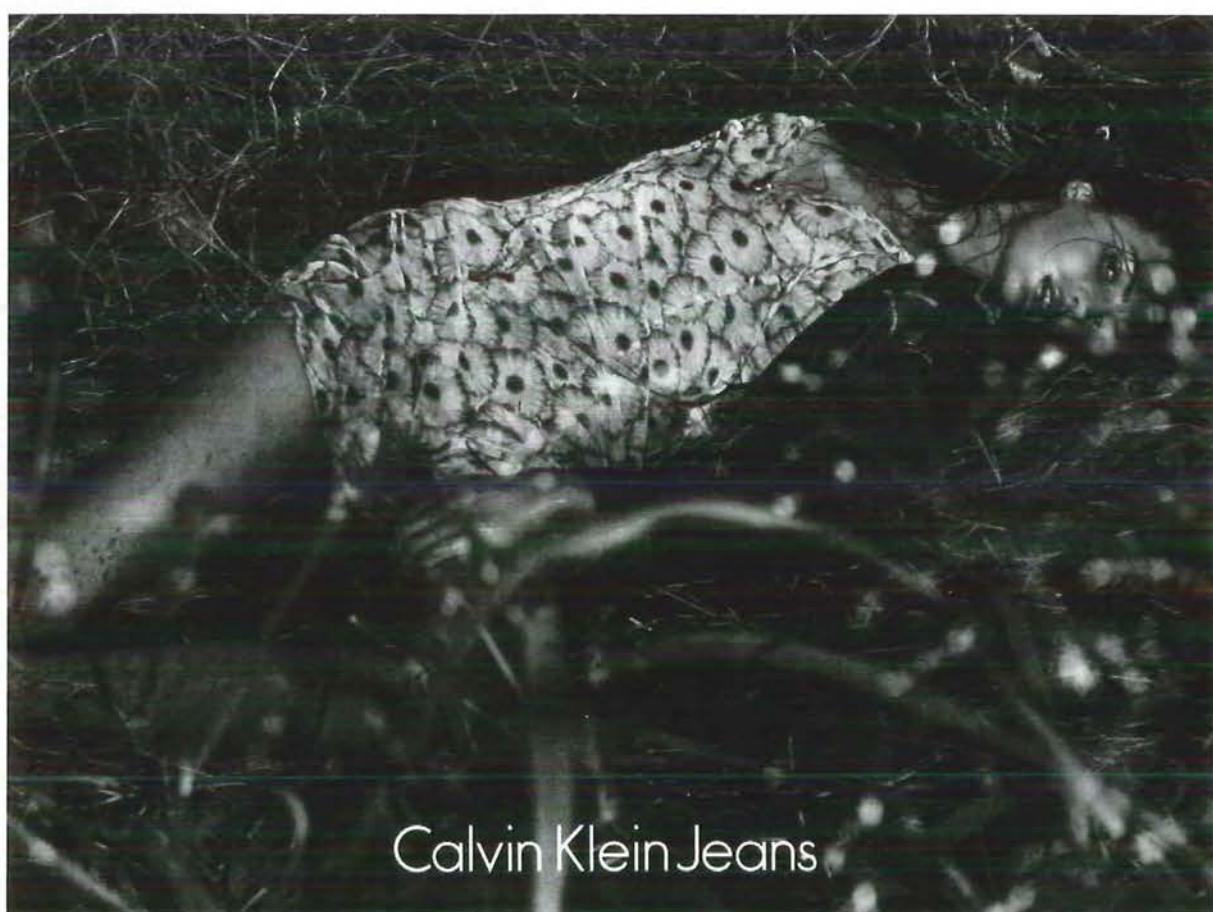


Illustration 21. *Calvin Klein Jeans Advertisement*



Illustration 22. *His Bat Sails Bloodying the Sea*

Pointed One, bearing in mind all the simple and basic symbolism attached to pointed-ness. His face is pointed, so are his ears, his shoulders, his knees, his back and of course his nails and fangs. According to a primitive mental operation which prefers not to distinguish the structure of the parts from that of the whole, Nosferatu is an agglomeration of point." [Skal, 1990, p 54].

The patriarchal vampirism of *Dracula* receives both positive and negative affirmation within the first official version of Stoker's novel, the renowned portrait by Bela Lugosi. As the beginning of the transformation of the 20th-century vampire into a sexual icon and hero, Lugosi's queer interpretation of the Dracula character creates a certain paradox to the definitive heterosexual ending of this film.

Lugosi in this movie is a parody of an attractive "foreign" woman, with his pale skin, eyeliner, and darkened lips. This vampire is above all a monster to be *looked at*, or gazed upon, with his slick black hair, eloquent hands, handsome top hat, dazzling shirt, and magnificent black cape [Freeland, 2000, p 129]

Despite the ambiguous feminisation of Dracula, the structures of desire found within the rest of the narrative privilege patriarchal and heterosexual desire, especially when Mina and Jonathan are released from the vampire's spell to find what is clearly defined as the natural order of heterosexual union. Through the central vampire antagonist, Dr Van Helsing's victory over the vampire's alluring and seductive trance, we witness the triumph of masculine knowledge, science and rationality over the amoral (possibly feminised or homoerotic) vampire contagion.

The vampire film exhibiting nearly every expression of phallocentric vampirism would be *Andy Warhol's Blood for Dracula* (1974) by Paul Morrissey. As probably the most blatant display of gender inequality, this film literally and explicitly reduces women to objects of desire to be traded, raped or possessed by all of the males (humans and vampires) within the movie. The financially struggling aristocratic father tries to sell his daughters to the wealthy foreigner (Dracula), the young male servant rapes the women and

takes advantage of their sexual attraction to him, offering them no love, tenderness or commitment; and the sickly patriarchal vampire foreigner who hungers for pure female virginal blood.

Sub-textual narratives of rape are not, unfortunately, specific to *Dracula* remakes within the 20th-century vampire genre. The codes of patriarchal violent eroticism are also explicit within the bite scene in the late-20th-century vampire fiction *Blade* (1998). Within this film, the subordinate heroine surrenders herself to Blade at the climax of the movie. Blade, the emotionally inaccessible male hero, reluctantly accepts to drink her blood in order to survive. Once engaged in the theatrics of their erotic vampire embrace, Blade, the half-human/half-vampire becomes overwhelmed by the power of his desires (his bloodlust), and this bite scene soon escalates to the erotic tension and violence of a mild rape scene. In this version of patriarchal soft-porn, Blade aggressively and dominatingly thrusts his whole body on top of the woman, who objects painfully with small helpless cries of ... 'No', 'Stop', 'No'. Blade ignores her protests, and continues in the culturally condoned manner of patriarchal heterosexual behaviour where the woman's needs, voice and desires are ignored. Thus the language of female sexual oppression continues within our contemporary media-driven vampirism [see Illustration 23].

The continuation of female victimisation within vampire and *Dracula* narratives throughout the 20th century demonstrates that despite the raising of awareness of women's and children's rights in recent decades, patriarchal sexuality still remains entrenched within western consciousness. The recontextualization of Mina's rape and humiliation as 'seduction' within 20th-century *Dracula* narratives points to the convenient ambiguities surrounding women's presence and status within the patriarchal sexual act. The underlying codes of desire inherent within the sexual violence found in 20th-century vampire narratives also highlights the eroticism of power and wealth within our growing consumer society and raises questions concerning the definition of rape, within a culture that has historically perceived women as male property.

ACTION

The power of an immortal.
The soul of a human.
The heart of a hero.

WESLEY SNIPES

BLADE

STEPHEN DORFF

ROADSHOW
ENTERTAINMENT

NEW LINE CINEMA

MA 15+

PERSONS UNDER 15 YEARS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED
BY A PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN
MEDIUM LEVEL VIOLENCE, HORROR THEME

VIDEO EZY
WEEKLY
HIRE
VIDEO EZY

Illustration 23. *Blade*

3.4 Posthumous Posthumans: Libidinal Consumer Vampirism

The vampire's right of accumulation and aggression made possible by the fertile grounds of gender inequality within Victorian industrial capitalist society and then established as a dominant motif within the imperial modernist patriarchal vampire narrative at the turn of the 20th century, finds a cultural apex in the 21st-century's consumer world of desire and abandonment. The '*white male colonising heterosexual predator*' nature has become suspended in a sort of Disney erotic spectacle of continual desire satisfaction [see illustration 24.].

Our corporate, largely heterosexist sexuality is a unilateral and often violent individualism which conflates sexual gratification with power and domination.

Women will never achieve equality as long as their sexuality is commercialized, and as long as domination and economic exploitation are conflated with sexual pleasure [Heise in Lancaster & di Leonardo, 1997, p 413].

Capitalist desire premises that power, or the sensation of power, can be attained through the experience of ownership and possession. Capitalism sells us the ideology that the acquisition and accumulation of wealth, over and above our immediate needs, and in direct competition with those who have less, is sexy and amounts to the experience of pleasure and fulfilment. Capitalism, it seems has realigned the creative principle of the female sex within the wombless male, creating within the material world the illusion that the male ego is supreme.

Ours is a culture of premature ejaculation. More and more, all seduction, all manner of seduction (which is itself a highly *ritualized* process), disappears behind the *naturalized* sexual imperative calling for the immediate realization of a desire. Our centre of gravity has in fact shifted toward an unconscious and libidinal economy which only leaves room for the total naturalization of a desire bound either to



Illustration 24. *Vampire: The Masquerade*

fateful drives, or to pure and mechanical operation [Baudrillard, 1987, p 24].

The phantasm of instant desire-satisfaction is neatly summarised in Baudrillard's concept of 'premature ejaculation'. The culture of premature ejaculation articulates the undead consumer's unconscious consumption of pleasure (desire for desire). Through lack of control or consideration for the other, the narcissistic lover exorcises his desire or will over another, and consequently, Baudrillard's metaphor at once connects consumer desire to the vampirism of patriarchal sexuality.

The asceticism of the lover who devotes himself to the pleasure of the fleeting moment finds sanctuary within the populist illusion of continual desire satisfaction. In this imagined space where actions have no repercussions and greed has no consequence, we speed down the network of superhighways, capillaries of desire feeding our vampiric bloodlust for new information, entertainment, escapism, power and self-validation. Contemporary desire in its plastic ever-presence has no opportunity to be identified, for as soon as it has arrived, it departs, replaced by another, and yet another spectre of desire.

[Contemporary global late-capitalism] saturated as it is with "hyperreal sign-values and value-signs, potentialities without end," ... seems to inhabit "a flickering half-life, anaemic, parasitic, and thirsty for real bodily fluids. Insubstantial, dematerialized, dead-value joins up with insubstantial, disseminated, dead power in a panic passion of resurrection through the fresh blood of desire which, upon commutative transfusion, ever recedes into a bloodless and disorientated desire for desire [Latham, 2002, p 101].

The 21st-century vampire could be said to embody our entire commodity culture and the romantic narcissism of self-gratification it prescribes. Consumer vampirism is becoming globally institutionalised, as consumer identity and consciousness feeds rampantly on its own self-denial.

Who is to break the news to them [consumers] that their conscious experience of leisure products – their conscious 'pleasure' in

consumption – is in reality nothing but false consciousness ... who is to drive the stake of critique through the vile, undead heart of consumerist desire? [Jameson in Latham, 2002, p 32].

The abstraction of human need within contemporary society has taken Marx's alienation to a new 'posthuman' level of self-referencing.

Marx implies that capital's uncontrollable lust for self-valorization will be its undoing, that the vampiric hunger of capital will culminate in a paroxysm of self-consuming destruction [Latham, 2002, p 26].

Ironically, contemporary desire for desire returns to one of the earliest theses on human desire: Plato's identification of the unattainability of desire within the human condition. It also finds another prophet in Dante's *Divine Comedy* [early 1300s], where the poet Virgil defines "Hell as the state in which we are barred from receiving what we truly need, because of the value we give to what we merely want" [<http://geocities.com/enviroethics/consume.htm>].

The value the contemporary world places on desire and its fulfilment hides the true nature of value, as consumerism attaches a tangible experience to an intangible event. Lifestyle, possessions and buying power have overridden the simple joy of giving, the satisfaction of helping a friend, our sense of community, the beauty of a sunset or the devotion of a loyal pet.

Advertising, media and film provide the vehicles of 20th-century mass-consumptive desire for desire. It also promotes the continuing history of female sexual subjugation. The Victorian attitudes to women's sexuality outlined in the previous chapter are no longer the theories and doctrines of the male intelligentsia, they are the largely non-verbal or subtextual messages hidden within our contemporary structures of desire. Images used to seduce us into a consumer lifestyle often involve women's social and sexual degradation, humiliation or their disempowered domesticated status [see Illustration 25.].

The disposable commodity object, one we neither need nor appreciate except through the pleasure of its acquisition could be paralleled to the female body



Illustration 25. *Creature Comfort*

as a site of consumption. These ideologies have inflicted upon the woman's body a gross injustice of vampiric feeding and exploitation [see Illustration 26].

The patriarchal vampirism implicit within Illustration 26, lies in our consumption of the woman's body and sexuality as product. The erotic libidinal complicity of this advertisement, selling shoes and a silver bathing suit, lies not in the product this woman is promoting. The product has fairly much disappeared and what is left behind is the woman's consummativity. Her value as a consumable object reinstates our legitimacy as vampires. In consuming this phantasmic site of her humiliation and degradation, we become complicit to her vampiric exhaustion, some violently erotic interlude we have just missed. Consciously or unconsciously we drain this nubile composite of youth and flesh in the looking, as, ideologically, we rape this woman in the parasitic thrill of power as she lies there half-dead in a state of catatonic disorientation gazing out of the picture, tempting us to take her yet again.

A subtextual analysis of 21st-century vampire narratives reveals that women's social and sexual status still pertains to many of the patriarchal notions of superiority outlined in the Victorian Vampyres.

For example, the 2004 Hollywood blockbuster *Van Helsing*, a pastiche of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *Dr Jeckyl and Mr Hyde* (predominantly *Dracula*) by Stephen Sommers, reveals contemporary adherence to the many myths that have evolved around female sexuality and female oppression. The very nature of this multi-million dollar mass media production and its global accessibility exemplifies the power of the media and its ability to influence humanity's consciousness.

Within this film, the Transylvanian Gypsy Princess, the films heroine and love interest of Van Helsing, is presented according to the stereotypes of contemporary female sexual desirability. Although petite, she is strong, physically dexterous, sexually alluring and willful. Her strength however is never a match to Van Helsing or Dracula. Although she is a warrior, the



Illustration 26. *Sweetheart: Silver Swimsuit and Shoes*

Princess is constantly being rescued by Van Helsing and ultimately dies or sacrifices herself like Ellen in Murnau's *Nosferatu* for the sake of humanity and the destruction of the evil vampire.

Dracula's three brides within this film display yet another angle on contemporary attitudes to female sexuality and appropriate female behaviour. These three polymorphous changelings are both erotically exquisite temptresses and abject monsters. In this contemporary re-write of *Dracula*, these three women are presented as reproductive vehicles through which Dracula hopes to populate and therefore dominate the entire world. Dracula is neither attached to nor considerate of these three women as he easily plans to replace one of his brides, who is killed by Van Helsing, with the heroine.

Another interesting moment in *Van Helsing* which reveals contemporary attitudes to the sexual status of women is when the Friar, Van Helsing's assistant, rescues one of the female villagers from the vampires. After this act of gallantry, the villager asks how she can ever repay the Friar for saving her life? The Friar suggests a sexual favour and her submission reinforces the commodification of women's sexuality within mainstream contemporary visual culture.

Similarly, the vampire film *Underworld* (2004) subscribes to many of the 19th-century notions of female social and sexual submissiveness, as well as Freudian Oedipal structures of desire. The film's plot centres around the rebellious vampire heroine, Celine, who rejects the silenced model of feminine passivity, and repeatedly attempts to warn her decadent vampire clan that the werewolves threaten their lineage and supremacy. She is continually ignored. Celine's disobedience and what is subtly portrayed as her overly emotional and irrational suspicions are punished with violence when Craven, the clan leader, slaps her across the face in a patriarchal display of power and ownership. Celine's rejection of Craven's sexual advances supposedly gives him authority and justification to physically dominate her

Eventually in desperation, Celine awakens one of the ancestors, Victor, whose degenerate, bloodless body has been kept in vampire hibernation until

it is time for him to rule again. Victor, who is angered by Celine's disobedience and disrespect of clan law, even after the plot against the vampires is uncovered, does not punish her, as we learn that he is Celine's maker. The strangely erotic and Oedipal relationship between Celine and Victor only ends when Celine finds out that Victor was the vampire who slew her family in front of her as a child, before turning her into his next vampire companion. This incestuous structure of desire and power then submits to the weak 'Romeo and Juliet'-style ending to this unimaginative Hollywood vampire narrative, when Celine finally mates with the vampire/werewolf-hybrid hero that the werewolves have bred to destroy the vampires' reign. Despite her physical strength, her dominatrix-style attire and apparent will, throughout this movie, Celine is constantly looking to men to either listen to her, protect or ultimately save her.

The restructuring of desire away from patriarchal and materialist displays of power and phallocentric desire would be to reposition female sexuality and pleasure as a necessity to cultural change and humanity's development.

Sexual fulfilment, like consumer fulfilment in the age of consumer desire, is intrinsically loaded with patriarchal signs of power and privilege. This unilateral system of desire can be ultimately seen to deny us sexuality all together. How is it possible that a man and a woman living within a patriarchal culture can engage in a balanced relationship, when so much of their behaviour and attitudes are constructed within a system that favours one gender over another?

The libidinal economy of heterosexual sexuality is played out within the theatrics of phallocentric sexuality (the elderly male vampire vampirising the catatonic young virgin) and the penetration of the woman's body. This taking of pleasure from her bodily cavities, and the concomitant lack of interest or sense of responsibility towards her sexual needs and desires (the culture of premature ejaculation) summarises the capitalist consumer ideology towards our 'feminine' resource: nature, our Earth, the Mother. For the patriarchal male ruler, husband or leader, the act of penetration becomes a symbol of his power or assertive dominance over the woman/land that has become both a

physical and economic resource. The planting of his seed within the loins of his land/wife's property must, if possible, be guaranteed with some form of assurance or insurance as to his accumulation of wealth, status and capital. Patriarchal capitalism could be argued to simulate childbirth and, in a reversal of the divine authority vested in the woman's body, transfer the power of production giving the illusion of the male sex as the creator and the Mother.

Within this distorted symbolic order of heterosexuality, the threat of penetration of the male body stands as a blatant violation of sexual and economic boundaries. It 'crosses the property line' and confirms the "masculine privileges in the uses of violence, and access to the kinds of social power which accompany bodily integrity in our culture" [Waldby, 1995] [see Illustration 27.].

Homosexual love, void of difference and void of socially constructed power imbalances is a threat to our consumer libidinal economy, as it is a love void of product. Without the justification of reproduction, homosexual love suggests that desire can exist beyond the sanctioned outcomes of the heterosexual union and beyond the accumulation of property, power and social status.

Penetration of the male body disrupts gender power relations as it suggests a male can experience pleasure in submission. For a male within the patriarchal culture to surrender control, in particular sexual control, implies the signs of sexuality are transferable. It also suggests a woman has the ability to be sexually assertive, such as is demonstrated by the tabooed female and lesbian vampires.

Ironically, in terms of sexual arousal, the woman has preserved a bodily *jouissance* across the surface of the body and, potentially, derives a pleasure much greater than that of a man.

He has concentrated his libido on – one can't even say, his penis – on domination, on the rupture of ejaculation: "I possessed you", "I had you". Look at all the expressions like these used by men: "I screwed you", "I made her". It's no longer the totality of the body's surface that counts: it's just this sign of power: "I dominated you", "I marked you".



Illustration 27. *Nosferatu the Vampyre*

This obsession with power is such that man ultimately denies himself all sexuality. On the other hand, in order to exist as body he is obliged to beg his sexual partners to transform him a bit into a woman or a homosexual [Guattari in Genosko, 1996, p 206]

The French lesbian feminist theorist Luce Irigaray believes women's identity and desires cannot be articulated within the discourses currently available, that is in those discourses defined by the autonomy of the phallus and the constraints of the Oedipus myth. She believes that a *tactical homosexuality* must be actualised within the psyche to readdress this age-old imbalance.

She posits homosexuality – a homosexuality that may or may not involve sexual intimacy – as a political and personal necessity insofar as women are committed to challenging their social definitions. Neither heterosexual nor homosexual love objects are primordial, natural, innate, or given. Both heterosexual and homosexual women are produced by, and in a history of, women hatred [Grosz in Burke, Schor and Whitford, 1994, p 349].

The continuing cultural persistence of patriarchal notions of gender and sexual inequality and difference implicit within contemporary media and visual culture suggest that *desire*, be it active or sensual, still remains essentially taboo in a woman. Women are generally portrayed as the objects of desire, rather than desire's originators. She is desire's attainable outcome, and when she behaves to the contrary, she is perceived as only imitating, rather than embodying the structures of male desire. As within the story of the Vampress, the assertive woman is the antithesis of femininity, a threat and nuisance to society, she must be silenced, domesticated or destroyed.

The sexually wilful woman, the tabooed Vampress, would appear to represent in many respects, female destiny within her own hands. Like the lesbian vampire, her supernatural physicality affords her choices beyond her bodily encoded breeding physiology, free to choose her sexual partners and, if she so desires, free to deny men access to her body altogether. Very few, perhaps no women at all, have evaded the fear or experience of sexual harassment, abuse or assault by men in their lifetime. This leads us to the

possibly paradoxical question ... what exactly is female sexual identity beyond the socio-historical manipulations and patriarchal definitions of abuse? How do we begin to gather a positive empowered image of female sexual *jouissance* from the limited discourses available to us at present?

Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva are three contemporary feminist theorists who offer us some possible solutions to these questions. Hélène Cixous uses the concept of feminine writing (*l'écriture féminine*) as a way of destabilising the libidinal economy rooted in phallogentric language and culture. As an alternative to masculine forms of writing/thinking, Cixous challenges women to write themselves through intuitive marking, scratching, scribbling and jotting down, and, ultimately, by writing the unthinkable [Tong, 1989].

Almost everything is yet to be written by women about femininity about their sexuality, that is its infinite and mobile complexity, about their eroticization, sudden turn-ons of a certain miniscule-immense area of their bodies, not about destiny, but about the adventure of such and such drive, about trips, crossings, trudge, abrupt and gradual awakenings, discoveries of a zone at one time timorous and soon to be forthright [Cixous in Tong, 1989, p 225]

Luce Irigaray is a psychoanalyst also seeking to liberate women from masculine thought and definition. She has identified that everything we know about women is from a male point of view, a "masculine-feminine" rather than a "feminine-feminine" perspective. There is, however, a paradox within Irigaray's concept of the "feminine-feminine" in that she believes defining a "feminine-feminine", is to destroy it, to be caught up once again in the system of masculine representation. Irigaray calls for the abandoning of Freudian (and Lacanian) constructs of the self. For example, she calls for the destruction of the Oedipus complex and the release of the "feminine-feminine" from its repression. She believes only such strategies will enable ... "women to experience herself as something other than "waste" or "excess" in the little structured margins of a dominant ideology" [Irigaray in *ibid.* 1989, p 227]

Irigaray also suggests that female sexuality and female desire needs to be addressed within the context of the multiplicity of her anatomical and sexual potential. The physical, emotional, spiritual, political or social implications of a woman's multiple orgasmic potential has never been properly discussed within the available discourse on human psychosexual or psychosocial behaviour [ibid, 1989].

Julia Kristeva takes a very different psychoanalytic perspective from Cixous and Irigaray. Kristeva believes gender is fluid and that it is dangerous to collapse sexuality into rigid biological identifications of masculine and feminine. She believes children have the choice to identify with aspects of either parents, despite society's attempt to construct them as only male, or only female. Kristeva also believes that society needs to come to terms with the "abject", a term generally associated with the female body but also used to define repressed or marginalised cultures. Kristeva believes that if society embraced the symbolic "abject", it would also embrace the mad, irrational, maternal and disavowed female body and her sexuality [ibid, 1989]. Society may also then be able to embrace the disease-ridden, foreign excessiveness of the vampire?

Despite the intellectual contribution by these and other postmodern feminist theorists, contemporary women still continue to structure themselves and their sexuality according to male parameters of femininity, with all of its distortions and paranoia surrounding power, domination, submission and desire [see Illustration 28.]. The highly sexualised condition of contemporary femininity (the porn star *erotique* and corporate paedophilia), endorsed by the media and television, are not signs of women's sexual empowerment, but of their continuing oppression. With humanity's sights firmly set on the surface of human existence, beauty and desirability have become highly marketable. From Botox to augmentation, sex and beauty are now acts of consumption, firmly grounded in male expectations of women and their role as a commodity. The smooth functioning of society and culture still appear to reside within the sacrifice of womanhood.



Illustration 28. *The Age of Innocence*

Contemporary cultural desire also appears to be transfixed by the epiphany of youth and immortality. The anorexic, corpselike woman and the eternal mindless child, who promote female sexuality on the catwalks, in film, television and advertising, maintain the icon of woman as sacrifice. As a by-product of our excessive and unnecessary consumer appetite and our imbalanced access to global resources and wealth, obesity and ageing have become Western diseases. The inevitable spectre of decay and infertility associated with aging apparently diminishes a woman's desirability, and therefore her value as resource and commodity. A contemporary woman embracing maturity and wisdom needs to glorify her being, so as to move beyond our present system of sexual desire and economic rationalism.

The ancient vampires were once women, anti-mothers, sexually empowered, insatiable and vengeful. They raped and seduced young men in their sleep, ate foetuses, and stole small children from their grief-stricken parents. Perhaps remnants of the old pagan nature and mother worshipping religions, they demanded respect even as they wreaked death and havoc on an unsuspecting and powerless humanity [see Illustration 29].

Through the dark (Christian) ages, the vampire became a scapegoat, a cannibalistic deliverer of death who spread plagues and diseases, haunting the peasantry with manifestations of unnatural and untimely suffering. This posthumous apparition of human brutality and decay, this supernatural demon represented the arm of nature's seemingly unjust selection in an age of superstition and unreason.

And then, during the late 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, the vampire entered the worlds of art and literature. Becoming decidedly more human and attaining a gender, these imaginative avatars offered humanity an escape from the travesties, contradictions and banality of this mortal coil. Passionate and instinctual, the rebellious, aristocratic vampire became our lover. Appearing as heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual predators, they reflected our *fin-de-siècle* culture in decline, challenging the political and economic hypocrisy and inequality of early industrial society.



Illustration 29. *The Vampress*

Enter Count Dracula: the 20th century personified. This unceremonious cannibal and rapist dominated vampire consciousness with all of the detachment, brutality and corruption of the capitalist era. Dracula's radical departure from any sense of spirituality and his materialist and competitive sexuality found a comfortable home in our age of rapid change, commodification and desire for desire sake.

From cannibal to consumer, the shifting metaphor of the vampire over the last 200 years of human history has arrived in the 21st century as a way of life, in a sense, heralding a new religion. Phantasmic consumer fetishism has metamorphosed the once erotic bite of the vampire into the erotics of consumption. Ephemeral and transparent, our postmodern libidinal economy has its roots in a private lineage of patriarchal terror and sexual vampirism. The civilised violence of our predominantly phallocentric heterosexist human relations inflicts upon the woman's body, and subsequently the Earth's body, a gross injustice of bloodlusting and feeding. This system of desire has left us with the cultural understanding and belief system that women and the Earth are there to be consumed ... to be used, to be wasted, to be exhausted.



GOTHIC OPERA

featuring

LINK DANCE COMPANY
TAMSYN STOCK-STAFFORD
FLOUER ALDER
ANDREY POPOV

OLD DANCE STUDIO #3

edith cowan university. mt lawley campus

A Symphony in Terror
8pm.

9th, 10th, 11th October

Illustration 30. *The Gothic Opera*

CHAPTER 4: GOTHIC OPERA: A SYMPHONY IN TERROR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Gothic Opera: A Symphony in Terror* is a hybrid collaborative performance which incorporates dance, aerial theatre and opera. The subject of the performance is vampires, specifically the shifting metaphors of the vampire over the last two hundred years of its cultural iconography. The performance, like the thesis, deals with conceptual and theoretical issues such as consumerism, desire, gender and sexuality.

This work was conceived in December 2002, prior to the conception of the thesis or any detailed research into the vampire. The initial script was a creative and intuitive response to the subject matter and contained four scenes entitled The Human Tsunami, The March of Civilisation, The Gothic Zenith and The Vampire Earth. The first scene introduced issues such as fear, over population, mass culture, globalisation and consumerism. The second scene referenced the rise of capitalism, industrialisation, class struggle and hierarchy, competition, the glorification of the individual, alienation and the mediation of technologies within the human body. The third scene explored issues such as the loss of humanity within the modern world, our imbalanced western lifestyle, decadence and excess, and raised the questions of responsibility and possible redemption? The final scene or epitaph expressed an opinion, all be it inconclusive, that whether or not we rise to the challenge and accept the profound changes we are witnessing at this point in the history of our planet called Earth ... life, in some form or another, was going to continue.

The choice of locating this performance work within a Gothic *mis-en-scène* was made because of its relationship to fear and social anxiety, a subject matter that has dominated contemporary news and politics over the last decade. The Gothic Era (11th through to the 15th century) was fundamentally an art and architectural movement occurring across northern Europe. In architecture, the Gothic cathedral was characterised by stain-glass windows, pointed arches, elongated rib vaulting and flying buttresses, creating lofty,

weightless and heavenly interiors in which the faithful could worship God's creation here on Earth.

The Gothic Revival movement was a literary movement in the 18th and 19th centuries (see Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*) which revisited many Gothic themes such as the sublime, the uncanny and the supernatural. Gothic Revival narratives were grotesque, mysterious and desolate; the first vampire novel, Polidori's *The Vampyr* was written during the late or high-Gothic period.

Contemporary Gothic horror thus seemed an appropriate historical context as the fear of invasion, paranoia and terror now seem to dominate contemporary consciousness. Fear appears to be symptomatic of humanity's greatest challenge, our global environmental crisis created by western hubris and greed.

A period of academic research followed the writing of the initial script, as well as research into the feasibility of staging the production of the *Gothic Opera*. After several months of collecting information about vampire history, a thesis outline for *Cannibal to Consumer: The Shifting Poetic Metaphors of the Vampire* was drawn up. At the same time, an amended script for the *Gothic Opera* was written which reflected a similar chronological time line as the thesis. The theoretical issues discussed within this new script became more focused, dealing with issues of gender, sexuality, industrialisation, capitalism, consumerism and desire in relation to vampire mythology.

Performance research was carried out with the *Gothic Opera* collaborators during production and rehearsal periods, providing a testing ground for the ideas and concepts within the thesis. The theoretical concepts that link the thesis with the play were embedded within the performance's dramaturgy, its choreography, the music, costumes, lighting, set and characterisations. Production time and rehearsals provided a fertile opportunity to brainstorm and fine tune some of the moral and ethical questions raised within the script's text. Further changes were also made to the final performance's production due to collaborators' input and the logistical restraints of finance and time.

The filming of this production added yet another dimension to the creative and collaborative process which was the *Gothic Opera*. Some production and post-production (editing) meetings were held with the film crew, however the video included with this dissertation is largely the filmmakers' own interpretation of the performance piece.

The following sections contain the modified script and a list of characters from the *Gothic Opera: A Symphony in Terror*. Written alongside and within these two texts, are some of the performance's dramaturgy which has been added to assist the reader in identifying the theoretical issues within the performance which correspond to concepts within the thesis.

Cannibal to Consumer: The Shifting Poetic Metaphors of the Vampire was written after the production of the *Gothic Opera: A Symphony in Terror*.

4.2 THE SCRIPT

(Modified July/August 2003)

* Denotes performance dramaturgy.

4.2.1 Scene 1: Introduction

The opera opens in blackness. The sound of waves crashing against the bough of a boat penetrates the darkness. An overhead spotlight [front stage left] slowly reveals a small boy, sitting on the edge of what appears to be a coffin or shipping crate. The box is half-buried in earth and rubble. The boy wears a black cape that shrouds his torso. He clutches a small suitcase on his lap, his face is hidden by a square mask in front of which dangles a string of keys. The sound of the waves becomes intermingled with the distant cries of electronic sirens. Smoke [dry ice] laps at the boys ankles, as he rocks gently to and fro, clutching tightly the suitcase in his arms.

* This scene introduces the atmosphere of loneliness, isolation and displacement. The female character or foreigner who replaces the

small boy in the opening scene of the performance also represents the alien, subjugated or objectified woman, in this case a veiled Muslim woman. The scene is played very close to the audience in an intimate space attempting to get the audience to personally identify with the character.

After some time, the elongated hand of a vampire appears from out of the coffin. Before the menacing claw reaches the small child, the scene drops to blackness, and the sound of a small scuffle ensues. When the spotlight returns, the boy has disappeared and his case, which was full of a collection of obscure hoarded objects [money, keys and curios], has fallen to the ground, spilling its contents on the stage floor.

* This scene represented our predatory society and the corruption and abuse of innocence and vulnerability. It was modified in the final production.

Again, the vampire's claw appears, this time it grips the edge of the coffin. Slowly, a vampire [*The Countess Elisabeth Bathory*], levitates out of her bloody grave to a standing position. *The Countess* steps out of the coffin and walks slowly towards back stage right. The music has shifted from oceanic sirens to eerie ambient electronic vampire screeches, and a mumbled human-voice soundscape.

The Countess is dressed in an elaborate and majestic late-Elizabethan head-dress and cloak. The train of her long cloak cascades behind her, it degenerates gradually from bejewelled velvet and brocade, embroidered roses and spider webs, to brambles and vines, then tatters and, finally, rubbish. *The Countess* travels in a transfixing glide across the stage, a spotlight casting her eerie shadow across the floor.

* The symbolism behind the *Countess's* cloak was the moral and physical degeneration of life on Earth. The *Countess's* choreography,

moving slowly from front stage left to back stage right was chosen to draw the audience's attention from the intimate scene at the beginning of the performance (front stage left), out into the theatre space using the western convention of reading from left to right.

Out of the *Countess's* shadow appears another character, *Spectre*. *Spectre* is supernatural, elemental, vaporous and deadly. She represents the vampire of European folklore who haunts families and relatives, and acts as an analogy for death. *Spectre* dances a playful yet sinister game of cat and mouse with *The Countess* ... stalking the invisible, tempting disappearance and the shadows.

Eventually, *Spectre* is joined by another character *Paradox*. *Paradox* is a stereotypical "Damsel in Distress", a character that featured extensively in Gothic and high-Gothic literature. However, she is also a vampire. *Paradox* enters the scene in what appears to be a catatonic trance, distracting *Spectre* from her duet with *The Countess*. *Spectre*, *Paradox* and *The Countess* perform an abstract take on the Oedipus myth, alluding to the incest, jealousy and revenge motifs found within vampire mythology. *Paradox* eventually bites *Spectre* (implicit, not literal) so as to win *The Countess's* affection; the gender reversal alluding to the homoerotic nature acquired by the vampire motif when it entered English literature in the 19th century.

* This section of the performance introduces the character *Paradox*. *Paradox* is a stereotypical Victorian woman in patriarchal terms; a weak, mindless imitator who is in constant need of being saved by a strong, rational male. Her name refers to the paradox within the image and the reality of women's real strength. Here we are also introduced to the homoerotic theme found within vampire mythology as well as to other psychosexual aspects to the vampire myth such as its relationship to Oedipus.

A fourth character, *Lord Ruthven*, Polidori's notorious aristocratic vampire whose character was supposedly based on the poet Byron, has been voyeuristically watching this trio from the edge of the stage. *Ruthven* eventually enters the stage and joins the trio, dancing with both *Spectre* and *Paradox*. *Spectre* is becoming increasingly weak and translucent because she has been fed upon by *Paradox*. *Spectre* is repelled by the mounting corporeal nature of the dance.

* The bisexual trio between *Spectre*, *Paradox* and *Ruthven* refers to the polymorphous sexuality of the vampire.

The Countess Bathory has left the stage, her long train slowly disappearing back stage right. The music becomes a lot darker and more intense as *Paradox* and *Ruthven* are left to dance alone. The gentle and playful eroticism of the previous scenes turns into a more physical and slightly violent duet. The phantasmal element of the story is dying, as the vampire heads towards the 20th century. As the two dancers move towards the back of the stage, the spotlight that has been following them reveals the base of a huge Gothic cathedral-like structure, created from industrial waste that has previously been in darkness.

* *Paradox* and *Ruthven*'s dance is the dance of heterosexual love. The characters choreography within the performance includes mirroring and combat sequences referencing computer combat games. Gender opposition is suggested here through a series of small fights or battles highlighting the Victorian concept of biological incommensurability. The violence of this scene escalates as it moves to the rear of the stage introducing the Gothic cathedral-like industrial waste set. Here the vampire is heading towards the 20th century and the dancers' final choreography at the base of the set resembles the exaggerated gestures of early 20th-century silent film actors.

Once framed by one of the gothic arches in the set, *Paradox* and *Ruthven* separate. Enter *Count Dracula* the quintessential 20th-century industrial and patriarchal vampire. *Count Dracula* enters the scene silhouetted by an intense backlight where he stands motionlessly for several moments, framed by the large archway. *The Count* walks slowly toward the audience, in a kind of frozen, hunched vampire-stance: similar to Count Orlock in *Nosferatu*, the 1922 German Expressionist film based on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. As *Dracula* moves slowly forward, three women appear behind him, *The Countess Carmilla Karnstein*, *The Countess Szekelay* and *Geraldine*.

* Here the play leaves the 1800s and enters the reign of *Count Dracula*. The industrial theme becomes more exaggerated within the music at this point and the set becomes more dominant, thus referring to European industrialisation and modernity. The appearance and movement of the vampires in this scene is influenced by 20th-century film. Patriarchal sexuality is also introduced at this point in the play's narrative. *Dracula's* self righteous, arrogant and dominating presents controls and humiliates his three brides/slaves. Although *Dracula's* consorts are taken from historic lesbian and bisexual vampire characters, their submission to *Dracula* within the play alludes to the dominance of patriarchal heterosexist ideology within 20th-century vampire narratives and consciousness.

These women are *Dracula's Consorts* and they spiral around him in an alluring dance as he walks toward the front of the stage. The music has become more industrial and rhythmic, and the spiralling has a trancelike (whirling-dervish/demented can-can) mesmerism to it, building in tension, speed and dynamism as the group gets closer to the audience. *Dracula's* head is bowed so that the audience cannot see his face. Once he reaches the centre of the stage, he turns to face stage right and begins to glide towards stage right. *Dracula's Consorts* leave him at this point as *Paradox* returns to the scene. The four women perform an energetic ritual where one of the vampires is

chosen as a sacrifice to be presented to *Dracula*. Whilst this is taking place centre stage, *Dracula* has stopped in front of the grand piano and has begun to slowly take off his hat, gloves and jacket [slow motion]. Eventually *Paradox*, the iconographic quintessential virgin archetype, who is once again in a catatonic trance, is singled out to be *Dracula*'s sacrifice. The three consorts present *Paradox* to *The Count*, and disappear. *Dracula* watches the virgin for some time, approaching her slowly and deliberately. Then, very quickly, he launches himself at her, attacking her throat in a violent and sweeping gesture, smothering his prey. The music stops and the theatre lighting drops abruptly into darkness.

* *Dracula* remains detached and void of emotion as his brides dance around him, bidding for his attention. The women then turn against each other when it becomes time to select *Dracula*'s next victim. This scene highlights a culture which sets women competitively against one another, alienating them from themselves and their own sex. It also exposes women's complicity in their own victimisation. The bite scene or symbolic rape of the virgin archetype (*Paradox*) by *Count Dracula* within this performance presents the iconic quintessential image of the 20th-century vampire motif ... The elderly empowered male vampire taking advantage of the innocent, catatonic or sleeping, half-naked virgin/child. It also expresses the patriarchal image of woman as a sacrifice.

4.2.2 Scene 2: Gothic Zenith

The lights slowly come up to reveal a gloomy, shadowy set which, prior to this point, has been in relative darkness. The set is a slightly absurdist and surrealistic cross between an old dilapidated Gothic cathedral, postmodern architecture and a rubbish dump. A sublime Disney Gothic Spectacle, a useless monument to the dead power of a seductively disorientating aesthetic wonder-waste-land [Birringer, 1991].

* This scene is played at the very far end of the theatre space utilising the dramatic depth and loftiness of the sublime gothic-like cathedral set. The concepts and metaphors within the dramaturgy of this scene become more general, relating to humanity rather than individuals, thus the distance of the action helps to support the conceptual elements of the play.

There are humans embedded in the set (living columns and plinths), constructing parts of the architecture. They move subtly from time to time, creating a breathing illusory aliveness to its structure, a pulsating impermanence and uncanny spectacle that defies any enlightened rationalisation of a fixed universe.

* This part of the script was not actualised within the final production.

A female opera singer is standing back stage right, next to a grand piano and a seated accompanist. This woman is *Modernity* and she is wearing a large 17th-century panniered red satin dress, excessive jewellery with a corsage of death lilies in her hair. The singer appears almost to be consumed by the volume of her costume's fabric, which is subtly decorated in objects and materials such as plastic, tubes, computer chips and organs that juxtapose the tradition of its cut. The piano begins to ring gentle baroque bell-like discords into the g.comy silence, and *Modernity* begins her mournful aria. The aria builds slowly into rich, more Romantic arpeggios [Rachmaninov-like] as a vampire's sarcophagus, at the apex of the Gothic tower slowly opens [top left-hand corner]. The long train of a woman's dress [white] covered in blood and veins, falls to the floor – dust, rubble and money falling with it. An old matriarchal vampire appears from her lair, she is small and withered. Her long arms and fingers extend like spider's tentacles from her Elizabethan-style nightdress. She is *Lamia*, the Mother or Creator of all vampires. Once *Lamia* has appeared, a small child vampire, dressed like an 18th-century demonic Russian aristocratic doll [*L'Enfant Vampyre*], falls out from behind her dress. *L'Enfant*

Vampyre descends in a graceful slow-motion somnambulist tumble towards the ground. As the child falls (from grace), *Lamia* lets out a silent scream, attempting to wake her protégée and companion. At the bottom of her descent, just above the grand piano, *L'Enfant Vampyre* awakes. The rest of the vampires [*The Children of the Night*], have gathered around the piano, and they rise up to grab her as she falls, beckoning her to join them on the ground. As *The Children of the Night* dance around and underneath the piano and, in the excess of *Modernity's* skirt, they appear to be out of control, in an orgiastic hedonistic trance, consumed by desire.

* This scene refers to the decadence and decay of the modern world. *Modernity* is our bard and she sings to us of the sadness, desperation and schizophrenia of a world spiralling out of control towards annihilation. *Modernity* sings to *L'amia* about their loss, both public and personal, as *Modernity* is aware of her own complicity and contribution to humanities descent from grace. *L'amia* represents the spirit of women in the age of patriarchy. She is the disempowered icon of femininity, as her age and wisdom have no voice. In frustration, *L'amia* then turns upon herself ... committing the very worst of crimes, incest.

Momentarily, a spotlight fades in and out on a character hidden within the set. It is *Dracula*, and his mouth, hands and chest are covered in blood. He tries to wipe the blood from his mouth and hands with some money that has fallen out of *Lamia's* coffin, but is unsuccessful, and this inset is returned to darkness.

* Parts of the scene were not actualised within the final performance.

L'Enfant Vampyre pauses momentarily, suspended motionlessly above the piano contemplating her moral decision. She decides not to join her vampire kin in the grips of their *illusion* and begins to slowly rise upwards, above the scene of materialistic excess and depravity on the ground below her. As *L'Enfant Vampyre*

rises up to the top right-hand corner of the set, parts of it begin to move with her – stuffed animals, statues etc.

* In this section of the scene *L'amia*'s victim becomes our hero, as *L'Enfant Vampyre* rises out of the fire, her strength becoming a role model to all those who wish to transcend the illusion of contemporary consumer hell.

Once she has reached the top of the theatre, *The Children of the Night* reappear from underneath the piano. They are decidedly more composed than in the previous section of the dance, and they walk, quite humanly and detached – as if off to work in the morning – towards the coffin, out of which *The Countess Bathory* rose in the opening scene. As each vampire reaches the centre of the stage [staggered], they pause momentarily, one opening an object wrapped in plastic, another playing with a mobile phone, the others rummaging through handbags full of rubbish. Some of the vampires try to eat the objects as if they are food, spitting them out in disgust, and emptying the contents of their bags on the ground. They continue to walk, either exiting stage left or climbing back into the *Countess*'s coffin.

* The actions of the *Children of the Night* refer here to the lack of respect and consideration the western world has for our most precious resource, our Earth. Their actions also refer to the native American Indian proverb about how once all the animals have been killed, all the rivers are polluted and the trees cut down, we will not be able to eat the only thing that remains, money. *The Children of the Night* return to the *Countess*'s coffin, thus returning us to the play's beginnings.

As *The Children of the Night* leave the stage, the aria climaxes and *L'Enfant Vampyre* reaches the zenith of her ascension at the top left-hand corner of the set, where she is surrounded by a scene of floating stuffed animals and skeletons (Hell in the Air). As an electronic soundtrack replaces the final note sung by

Modernity, a bright piercing floodlight, projected from the top left-hand corner of the set, shines directly at the audience. The electronic soundtrack climaxes, descending into muted vampire screeches. The theatre drops to blackness and silence.

* The conclusion of this scene has a decidedly postmodern ambiguity. The hero's ascension could refer to transcendence or it could refer to death. A philosophical dilemma is present within the author's uncertainty as to the future. Will humanity avert the looming crisis or is death, as in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, the only true purification?

4.2.3 Scene 3: The Vampire Earth

The theatre remains in darkness and silence for several moments. A loud thud, and then another, and another, reverberate around the darkened stage. Once this din has ceased, the entire theatre's auditorium lights come up to reveal a pile of earth spilling out of broken black plastic garbage bags, bits of skeletons and rubbish dropped onto the centre of the stage. The stage is otherwise void of vampires or humans. Eventually, an old man dressed in a dishevelled suit [contemporary], hat and overcoat appears backstage left. This character is *Immortality*. *Immortality* shuffles slowly across the stage, deaf to his surrounds and oblivious to the audience. It is indeterminable whether or not this character's costume is that of a corporate lawyer or a hobo, as it is slightly dirty and ill-fitting. He is barefooted. *Immortality* shuffles forward, focussing intently on the ground in an attempt to keep from falling over. He is old and his limbs are weak. The old man takes a long time to shuffle across the stage: his upper body remains static as he walks, and it appears as if he is gliding awkwardly from back stage-left to centre stage-right. A large mound of earth and rubbish interrupts the old man's journey. When he reaches the pile of earth, he contemplates it for several moments and then continues on his route to the other side of the theatre,

unaffected by the inconvenience of having to step over the obstacle – the rubbish. As he walks off the stage and through the audience, the muted eerie electronic sound of the vampire sirens returns momentarily at the end of this scene. *Immortality* leaves the stage, the lights dim, and the soundtrack dies.

*The final scene of this performance offers us possible redemption in the form of two messages. One is to not take the illusion too seriously. The other is that life, in some form or another will always continue. This scene was not actualised within the final production.

Finis

4.3 List of Characters

(In order of appearance)

4.3.1 Scene 1

The Traveller

Embedded within the mythopoetics of the vampire motif is an expression of human fear and darkness. This dark character or contemporary 'outsider' represents that which we, in the West, cannot identify as being our own.

The Countess Bathory

This vampire is based on a historic account of a supposed vampire from the 17th century, *The Countess Elisabeth Bathory* or The Blood Countess. *The Countess* was supposedly a lesbian cross-dressing member of the Hungarian aristocracy, who was imprisoned in her own castle after being convicted of sadistically torturing and murdering approximately 650 virgins with two female accomplices. It was recorded that the *Countess* would drink and bathe in her victims' blood, as she believed it was good for her skin and prevented ageing.

Spectre

Spectre is an ethereal vampire based on the folkloric accounts of the vampire prior to the 18th century, when there was no distinction between a vampire

and a ghost, ghoul or spectre. *Spectre* is an illusion, a figment of our imagination, a shadow that stalks and preys upon us in the night. *Spectre* sits within the realms of the poetic vampires of early 18th-century poetry and prose, such as Baudelaire's "Metamorphoses of the Vampire" (1857):

When she drained me of my very marrow, and cold
And weak, I turned to give her one more kiss – behold,
There at my side was nothing but a hideous
Putrescent thing, all faceless and exuding pus.
I closed my eyes and mercifully swooned till day:
Who seemed to have replenished her arteries from my own,
The wan, disjointed fragments of a skeleton
Wagged up and down in a new posture where she had lain;
Rattling with each convulsion like a weathervane
Or an old sign that creaks upon its bracket, right
Mournfully in the wind upon a winter's night.

Paradox

This vampire is a paradox because she has the iconography of being a stereotypical "Damsel in Distress", a character who features extensively in Gothic literature and early 20th-century vampire films, however, she is also a vampire. *Paradox* represents the paradoxical and dichotomous roles of either victim/innocent/virgin or sexualised/whore/vamp, projected onto women within patriarchal storytelling. As a disempowered icon of femininity, *Paradox* would appear to function as a burden upon society. Weak, sickly and helpless, she represents a reality far distant from the roles the majority of women and mothers must take.

Lord Ruthven

Lord Ruthven was the first English literary vampire immortalised by Dr Polidori in his novel *The Vampyre*. *Lord Ruthven*'s character was supposedly based on his friend and client, the poet and novelist Lord Byron, with whom he had an ambiguous and volatile relationship. The implied bisexuality of *Lord Ruthven*'s character created many scandalous rumours about the relationship between Byron and Polidori. It also set the stage for other homoerotic vampire novels in the 19th century. Within this opera, *Lord Ruthven* is a ruthless killer whose appetite for blood is only succeeded by that of the arch-vampire himself,

Count Dracula

Within this opera, *Count Dracula* represents not only the quintessential patriarchal modernist vampire, he also represents the 20th century itself. *Dracula* is a metaphor for the moral degradation of our Western culture that bases its social values around the accumulation of wealth and power over the protection of human life. *Dracula's* symbolic rape of the virgin (*Paradox*) is a violent and excessive departure from all forms of spirituality or compassion, and embodies the moral contagion of our contemporary society's excessive materialism and greed.

Dracula's Consorts

Countess Carmilla Karnstein

This character is based on the vampire in Sheridan Le Fanu's novel *Carmilla*. As the first lesbian vampire character in English literature, *Carmilla* was originally a love story between two women; one a mortal and the other a vampire. The relationship between these two women was of a particularly challenging nature in the 19th century, not only because of the social taboo surrounding homosexual behaviour, but also because of the perceived inappropriateness and fear of female desire during that period. The companionship between these two women threatened the morays of Victorian patriarchal society, specifically the abjection of female desire, gender binarism and the importance of the institution of marriage.

Within Sheridan Le Fanu's original text, *Carmilla* slept in a coffin full of blood in a gravesite, surrounded by roses. Although she is ultimately killed (or penetrated), as most vampires are by the powers of scientific rationalism and the forces of patriarchy (the symbolic stake, or phallus); the intimacy and sensitivity of her friendship with her human lover and victim, Laura, has never been accurately portrayed in cinematic adaptations of Sheridan Le Fanu's original story.

Countess Szekelay

This character is based on one of the numerous film adaptations of the story of *Dracula*, Lambert Hillyer's 1936 *Dracula's Daughter*. In this black-and-white Hollywood adaptation, *Dracula's* daughter, *The Countess Szekelay*, succeeds her father at the beginning of the film and reaps his gruesome vampire legacy by stalking the unsuspecting inhabitants of London. *The Countess* preys mainly on vulnerable young women, whom she coerces to their death by posing as an artist/sculptor looking for models. *The Countess*, however, is at odds with her lifestyle. Racked with a social conscience, or sense of remorse about her subservience to her bloodlust, she approaches a psychiatrist to see if she can be cured of this illness. The scientist/psychiatrist is immediately transfixed by the *Countess's* engaging sexuality, but eventually sees through the dangerous woman and marries his secretary, the obedient virgin paradigm who ties his tie, keeps his records in order, and takes his shorthand.

Geraldine

Geraldine is a poetic vampire found in Coleridge's poem, *Christabel* (1816). This vampire is rescued by a noblewoman, Christabel, from a hoard of marauding bandits in the forest and taken to the safety of Christabel's father's castle. Here the two women share a bed in what is implied as both an act of female consoling and erotic lesbian vampirism.

4.3.2 Scene 2

Modernity

Modernity represents the march of modern civilisation, specifically the historic and cultural developments of the 20th century in the Western world. Like the vampires, *Modernity* is a reflection of the society in which she dwells. Her song, therefore, is a lament. *Modernity* cries for the loss of humanity within the modern world. Her aria is a cry of frustration and anger at the injustice, ignorance and imbalance within the capitalistic Western culture that rapes and pillages the planet for the purpose of personal gain and profit. *Modernity's* frustration also extends to her awareness of the hypocrisy within her own position. As a product of the consumerist system, she longs to mutate, to move beyond her own symbolic bloodlust and dependency, to be free of a

system that perpetuates so much suffering and violence.

The Children of the Night

Based on a phrase taken from Bram Stoker's text, when *Dracula* endearingly calls a pack of howling wolves "The Children of the Night".

Lamia

Lamia is the mother or creator of all vampires. She is based on the vampires of Greek mythology that inspired the poet John Keats to write "Lamia" (1816). Within this opera, *Lamia* is a 2000-year-old Egyptian vampire. She is a matriarchal figure who has an iconic connection with the Holy Mother, or Madonna, of the Christian religion. This vampire represents the spirit of women within the age of patriarchy. She is old, and tired of her immortality; she longs for death and release. Being the creator of all vampires, her blood is so strong that she has never been able to create a vampire companion strong enough to share her life with her, a vampire able to match her capacity for immortality. As a final and desperate act of self-sabotage, *Lamia* takes a young child as her companion. As it is against vampire law to create a vampire so young, *Lamia* subconsciously hopes that this action will end her own life.

L'Enfant Vampyre

This child is the hero of our story. *Lamia's* unwitting attempt at suicide does ironically create a vampire stronger than herself. *L'Enfant Vampyre* is our contemporary hero because she rejects the consumer vampire lifestyle. During her symbolic descent from grace (her soinnambulist tumble), *L'Enfant Vampyre* is faced with a moral question that faces all of us today in the West. In choosing not to descend into the materialist orgy that awaits her on the ground with *The Children of the Night*, *L'Enfant Vampyre* takes on the hero archetype, the individual who is strong enough to follow his/her own dreams, rather than submitting to the pressures of the mass. By choosing an alternative lifestyle (perhaps taking her own life symbolically), *L'Enfant Vampyre* ascends to the top of the theatre where she meets the future. The future is an ambiguous and unknowable space where she disappears forever.

4.4 List of Collaborators

**Writer/Director/Choreographer/Costume
Design and Construction/
Stage Manager/Production Manager**

Emma Margetts

Composer

Robert Morgan

Lighting Design

Nick Higgins

Assistant Choreographers

LINK Dancers

Assistant Artistic Consultant

Chrissie Parrott

Set Design and Construction

Korin Gath
Dave Turley

**Assistant Costume Design
Costume Construction**

Donna Franklin
Donna Franklin
Mandy Elm
Fleur Kingsley
Emma Paterson
Christine Boreland
Nola Franklin
Kathryn Puie

Sound Design

Matt Lefroy

Aerial Instructor

Bryn Davies

Aerial Assistant

Kathryn Puie

Film Crew

Keith Smith
Danijela Simic
George Karpathakis
Adrian Ward

Performers

The Traveller

Emma Paterson

The Countess Bathory

Tessa Forbes

Spectre

Mim Wheeler

Paradox

Deb Robertson

Lord Ruthven

Narelle Codalonga

<i>The Countess Carmilla Karnstein</i>	Tessa Forbes
<i>The Countess Szekelay</i>	Jessyka Watson-Galbraith
<i>Geraldine</i>	Lee Johnston
<i>Dracula</i>	Korin Gath
<i>Lamia</i>	Flouer Alder
<i>Modernity</i>	Tamsyn Stock-Stafford
<i>L'Enfant Vampyre</i>	Mim Wheeler
<i>Pianist</i>	Andrey Popov

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